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Gukesh arrives to a rousing welcome

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EC sends notice to Nadda for plaint against Modi

Campaign speeches made by those holding high positions have more serious consequences, says poll body; similar notice served on Kharge over complaints related both to him and Rahul Gandhi

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

In a first, the Election Commission (EC) has issued a notice for violation of the Model Code of Conduct based on complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, taking a circuitous route, the notice was sent on Thursday to BJP president J.P. Nadda, not Mr. Modi.

In fact, the notice does not mention the name of the Prime Minister at all. The complaints attached to the notice, however, are those of the Congress against Mr. Modi's "malicious election speech delivered at Banswara (Rajasthan)", along with complaints from other parties, such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

In equal measure

The EC has sent separate notices to the presidents of the BJP and the Congress

- The EC asked J.P. Nadda to bring to the notice of all the star campaigners of the BJP to **"set high standards of political discourse and observe provisions of Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit"**
- Addressing Mallikarjun Kharge, the EC attached the complaints alleging that Mr. Kharge and Mr. Gandhi had violated the MCC by making **"false allegations"** against the PM

A similar notice was served on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, concerning complaints related both to him and party leader Rahul Gandhi.

The poll body sought responses from both parties by 11 a.m. on April 29.

EC officials said this is the first time in recent history that the panel has taken cognisance of a complaint against a Prime Minister.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the EC had given a clean chit to Mr. Modi on complaints lodged by the Opposition parties.

What is also unprecedented is the poll body issuing Thursday's notices to the respective party presidents instead of directly to the individuals concerned.

'Set high standards'

In its notice to the BJP president, the EC asked Mr. Nadda to bring to the notice of all the star campaigners of the party to "set high standards of political discourse and observe provisions of Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit".

The Commission said it has taken a view that while individual star campaigners will continue to remain responsible for speeches made by them, it will address party chiefs "on a case-to-case basis". Campaign speeches made by those holding high positions have more serious consequences, the EC said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 14

Phase 2 of LS polls today; 1,202 candidates in fray

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The stage is set for polling in 88 constituencies across 13 States in the second phase of the Lok Sabha election on Friday. This phase will see over 15.88 crore voters exercising their franchise in 1.67 lakh polling stations across the country.

A total of 1,202 candidates are in the fray – 1,098 male, 102 female and two transgender persons.

All 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, eight seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, six seats in Madhya Pradesh, five seats each in Assam and Bihar, three seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and one seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir will go to the polls.

Into the hinterlands: Election officials en route to polling booths on Munroe Island in Kollam of Kerala on Thursday. C. SURESHKUMAR

Over 16 lakh polling officials have been deployed for the exercise involving 8.08 crore male, 7.8 crore female and 5,929 third-gender electors, the Election Commission said.

A total of 34.8 lakh first-time voters and 3.28 crore voters in the age group of 20-29 years are expected to exercise their franchise on Friday.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 14

'If BJP wins, simultaneous polls will be implemented'

Nistula Hebbar
VISHAKHAPATNAM

Simultaneous polls are "definitely going to happen" if the BJP comes back to power after the ongoing Lok Sabha election, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday.

Speaking exclusively to *The Hindu*, Mr. Singh, who headed the BJP's manifesto committee, said it was on a par with other ideological goals of the BJP, such as the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code. He said that the dialogue between India and China was ongoing and constructive, and had not led to any further flare-up in tensions after June 2020.

FULL INTERVIEW » PAGE 15

NEARBY

Battle 2024: It's crucial for three major parties

BENGALURU
The electoral fight in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies, which are going to polls on Friday in Karnataka, is significant for all three major parties. For the Congress, the poll outcome is significant for providing political stability in the State and increasing the party's tally at the national level. The BJP, which has set the target of winning 50 seats in south India, considers Karnataka the party's "gateway to the South". » Page 8

Census delayed as govt. wants to end SC/ST quota: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The 2021 census has been indefinitely delayed to end reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Congress alleged on Thursday, stepping up its attack on the BJP-led government over the issue of caste enumeration.

"The census that was due in 2021 has still not been done. It has been delayed by three years. Why? It is because they want to end reservation. They don't want us to know the population of SCs and STs," Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh said at a press conference.

> As a result of the delay in conducting the census, about 10 crore people are being denied the benefit under the Food Security Act
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress general secretary

"As a result of the delay in conducting census, about 10 crore people are being denied benefits under the Food Security Act, which has been renamed as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana," he added. Though the Congress has been alleging that the BJP wants 400-plus seats in the Lok Sabha to amend the Constitution and end reservations, this is the first time that the party has linked the delay in conducting the census to reservations for SC and ST communities.

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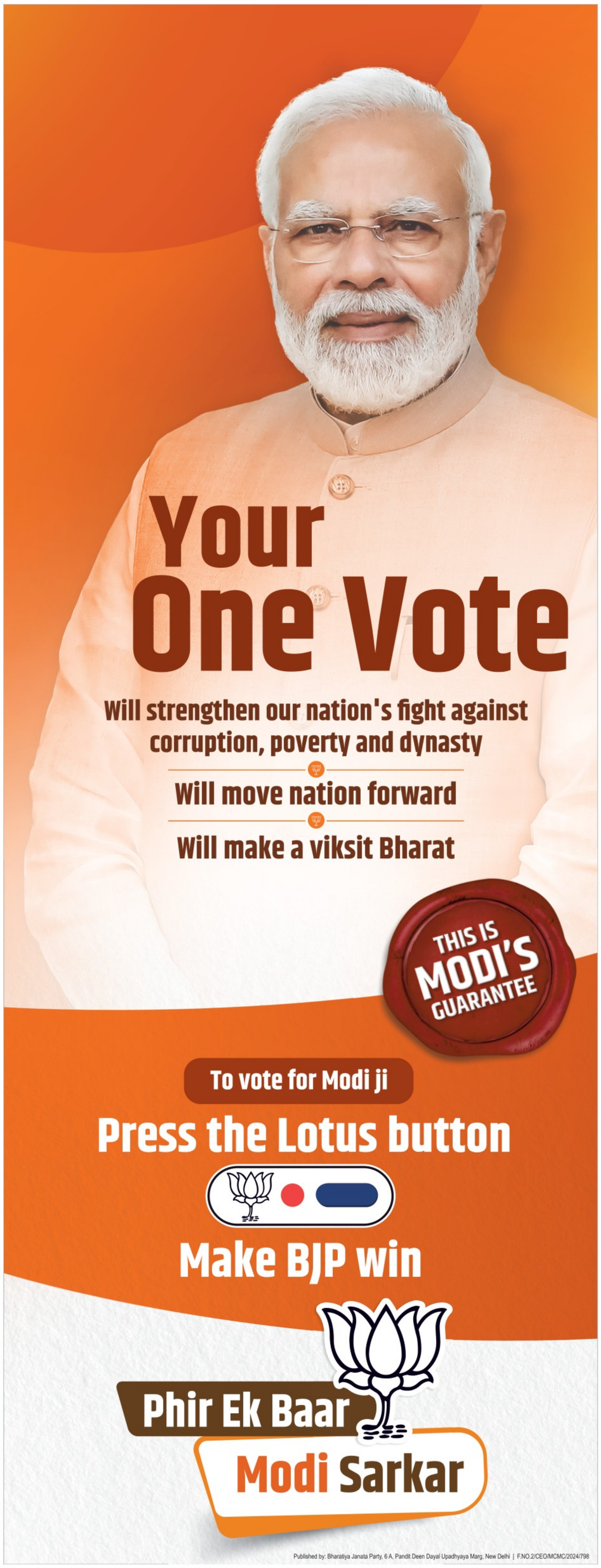
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Technology explosion promises to drive Indian sports forward

Megha, CEO & Co-Founder of Stupa Sports Analytics, feels understanding data is the key to breaking barriers and helping players improve performance

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kamesh Srinivasan

As a young chess player, growing up in Chennai, I remember getting chess books from Russian Cultural centre, the Connemara Library and the British Council, not only to improve my game, but to understand and admire the brilliance of Mikhail Tal, Jose Capablanca, Bobby Fischer, Garry Kasparov, Anatoly Karpov and so many more.

Even as we enjoyed playing against good opponents, we also had to endure the pain of playing with novices for lack of better options in the neighbourhood.

In today's time, even as five Indian players competed in the Candidates tournament in Toronto (Canada) to decide the Challenger for the world crown, it was amazing to witness the way chess has grown.

Technology has literally shrunk the world. If one gets on to a chess platform on the web, one can play with anyone logged into the system around the world, from United States to Sweden, Indonesia or Brazil. It can be done any time of the day or night, and the time format can be chosen too.

Instant analysis

Most importantly, you can have the analysis done within seconds after each game. You get points according to the rating of the opponent. You get to know the accuracy level of your game as well as your opponent's. Every move is categorised into brilliant, great, best, excellent, good, book, inaccurate, mistake, miss and blunder.

And when the computer is analysing the game, it also suggests what could have been a better option and the line one could have taken. In summary, it tells how you fared in the opening, middle-game and end-game. You can also follow different lines at the click of a mouse.

All this for a nominal fee, and you can stay engaged with brilliant players around the world and keep getting better. It is fun and absolute enjoyment. The mind is kept occupied in a healthy way, and it is as good as meditation !

Technology has definitely enhanced the performance of players, not only in chess but also across a variety of sports. But that is only one aspect, as one gets to chat with one of the wizards, Megha Gambhir, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Stupa Sports Analytics, who is mostly travelling around the world, selling technology in sports to the international market.

A technocrat, married to a table tennis player and coach Deepak Malik, Megha ventured into sports to find some solutions that would help the players enhance their performance. Basically, the two made video and data analysis to help the paddlers. Stupa was established in February 2020, just before Covid froze the world.

"Through video analysis, the players can understand where they are hitting the forehand, backhand and the heat map of the balls. They can evaluate their rallies. They get the data points and evaluation of their foot work, etc. We were working with 40 of the top 100 players in the world. They were also keen to understand their opponents' strategy," said Megha.

Analyse and improve

The focus was on helping players and coaches keen to analyse their performance and improve.

"Many coaches did feel that technology would replace them. Yet, we were able to work with many national federations around the world, helping them with real-time analysis of the videos of the matches and practice sessions. For the Tokyo Olympics, we supported close to 25% of the table tennis players but the revenue was not great. It was not exactly the 'right product market fit'. We had to keep evolving. From 2022 till now we have shifted our product base," said Megha, who has a rich experience as she has worked in HCL, Cognizant, PepsiCo, American Express, World Bank, United Nations on the technology side.

Megha realised how many areas in sports were not technology-driven. "We figured out that there was a huge gap which the federations, league organisers and sports organisations struggled to bridge. There is a huge leakage of data and media because the federations are still maintaining their memberships and data on excel sheets. They are sitting on a large amount of data and media which they are not able to monetise. They are spending money on player development," she said.

Apart from cricket and football, most of the other sports struggle to get into the limelight as they are not aware of ways to have enough data for fan engagement on television.

"Even in badminton, which is widely played in India now, the world-level tournaments do not have anything other than line-calling 'in and out' with technology. There is not much information available for the fans to understand what exactly the players are doing, what the strategy of one player is against the other. The commentators, too, don't have enough information to talk about. These are the areas we identified," she said.

"Business started once we solved the puzzle. We now work in more than 15 countries. We started with table tennis and now we are getting ready to step into badminton, pickleball and tennis. We have end-to-end solutions on a SaaS (Software as a Service)-based platform. It helps the federations and league organisers to manage membership, player registrations, tournament management, league management, streaming on the web, managing and curating a layer of AI on top of it which helps them in personalising the data and availing data points for the players, fans and coaches. Through our platform, players can access all their historic information, trends and patterns, how they have been playing, what streams they have been part of, watch their highlights and so on. They can enable monetisation of the data and media from the same platform," Megha said.

Revenue option

More than being successful in the business of sports through technology, Megha was happy to generate revenue for the sports federations.

"The moment we started doing table tennis, we had soccer and cricket people coming to us and saying, 'we do have different platforms but no end to end platform'. They were having multiple technology partners and struggle integrating them", she said.

Everything in one platform has been a dream exercise, the strong point of her organisation. Megha pointed out that it was not planned at the beginning, but achieved along the way.

"It was not as if we were enlightened one day that this has to be done. It was a journey. Our second product is focused on fan engagement for the television audience. Doing interesting stats, graphics for the broadcasters. We have done it for table tennis. We will do it for badminton soon. We use AI for personalising and curating the data points for the respective stakeholders, could be fans, coaches, players and the information they should be seeing which is more relevant and more valuable for them. It is more for the fan engagement, doing the real time analysis of the game and putting it, merged with graphics", she said.

Since the work is done for broadcasters also, the analysis is obviously real time. "We get the analysis in milliseconds and the highlights of the matches right after it is done", she said.

It has been a roller-coaster for Megha in merging technology with sports, basically solving the problems all along, and helping the growth of the ecosystem.

The video analysis may also soon become real time for the players, thanks to the collaboration with the international federations, which in turn will get a chance to monetise the idea.

"We are also working with world federations. We are trying to implement the idea of putting up our cameras for all the matches and having them analysed real time, so that the world federation can start selling this as a service to the players", said Megha.

If that is one bright step forward at the international level, Megha has another interesting idea that may revolutionise sports further.

"We are planning to have smart courts, in which we will have the cameras fixed. Players and coaches can access real time information. We are doing it in padel and tennis. We will make announcements soon", she said.

Sports for fitness is one of the mantras that is enlarging the sports base.

"People are choosing sports as a fitness regime. Badminton has grown because the game is also looked at as a fitness exercise. People may not want to go to gym, but do want to go and play badminton because that is their way of burning the calories. So these new games have huge potential. Pickleball is relating more to fitness than leisure, and can grow really well", she said.

Smart move

Now comes the most interesting part. The smart move is to have smart courts in which a player scans a QR code on the camera and starts playing. Once done, they can generate their highlights for the social media along with nice stats.

"This is how we can crack the leisure market. People love the data more and more. They want to understand their body, their movements, everything. If they find the price reasonable, they are going to enjoy this. The motivation will be to put it on the social media. There will be ranking points which would help identify the right partners to play", she said.

Happy to be earning the big money from abroad, Megha is more focused in helping the growth of Indian sports ecosystem, by keeping the charges minimal. Soon, there could be thousands of smart courts around the country, fitted with cameras, ready to churn out social media content for the leisure players.

Megha is keen to collaborate with the Union Sports Ministry to have conclaves and sessions to educate the stakeholders in Indian sports, about the benefits of technology and the best way forward to take sports to a higher strata.

"Our aim is to help the sports federations start using technology in small areas. The people are in a cocoon and afraid of letting technology break into their domain. We hope to break the barrier and get in. Our focus is to support them, make them more efficient and be more effective in terms of the development of sports," she said.

There are interesting times for Indian sports as technology explosion promises to accelerate the growth.

THE GIST

- Megha is keen to collaborate with the Union Sports Ministry to have conclaves and sessions to educate the stakeholders in Indian sports
- She is confident that using technology is the ideal route to take sports to a higher plane
- Megha feels that Sports for Fitness is one of the mantras enlarging the sports base

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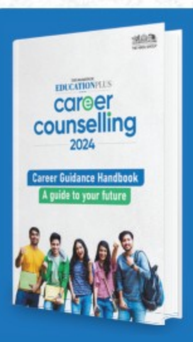

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Severe drought impacts lives, may influence polls in Mandya

Focus of political narratives in the intensely fought election, in which H.D. Kumaraswamy is BJP-JD(S) alliance candidate, has been on the 'ill-effects' of guarantees versus the 'much-needed sustenance' they have provided in a drought year

Sharath S. Srivatsa
MANDYA

Sugarcane crop lost due to drought in Mandya district, and (right) a rice mill that is barely functional as arrivals are down to a trickle following a decline in crop production. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Around 12 noon, Krishne Gowda sits idle at his Chandrashekara Rice Mill at Keelara in Mandya district, waiting for farmers to get their paddy for hulling. Arrivals are down to a trickle following a decline in crop production due to drought.

"Harvesting starts around November-December, and we would get paddy till about May. In the past, on an average, over 30 farmers would come daily. The number has dwindled to two or three farmers, as the crop was meagre. Even then, the quantity coming in is hardly 40 to 50 kg, a decline from more than a quintal (100 kg) that each farmer would bring. My mill is barely operational. I have reduced my staff from six to two. To top it all, the minimum user charge has gone up from ₹2,300 to ₹9,500," says Mr. Gowda whose mill is in drought-hit Mandya district.

Late rabi crop

Highly dependent on water from the historic Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) built across the Cauvery, a large part of the irrigated regions in the district are known for paddy and sugarcane cultivation. Many farmers did not cultivate paddy during the last kharif though the government released water after initially asking farmers not to cultivate paddy. The depleting water level in the KRS did not provide any scope for the late rabi crop.

In a district that is the fulcrum of Vokkaliga politics, where water is also an emotional issue and people are known for their strong political views, the Centre-State spat over the release of drought relief seems to be an issue. The focus of political narratives in the intensely fought election, in which the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy is in the fray as the BJP-Janata Dal (Secular) alliance candidate, has been on the "ill-effects" of guarantees versus the "much-needed sustenance" they have provided in a drought year.

Two views

"The State government has stopped contribution of ₹4,000 in Kissan Samman in which the Centre pays ₹6,000. The ₹2,000 given as drought relief by the State is peanuts. Why should the government spend so much on guarantees and point towards the Centre for drought relief?" said Panchalingu in Keragodu. "Farmers are selling cow dung to make some money though they require it for their land. For a small amount of cash, some are even pawning their jewellery with local money-lenders."

Contradicting him is Lakshmamma, in her 50s, who makes a living as a dairy farmer at Keelara. She argued that the guarantees, especially the Gruha Lakshmi, has helped her run the family in this drought year. While she does not have land, she struggles to manage fodder for her three cows. "I don't know politics, but all I know is that the Congress government is giving women money that is helping to run their families. Most women in the village are happy with the guarantees."

Farmers, who tried to brave the drought to cultivate sugarcane using groundwater, are also in distress as the crops yet to mature are wilting since a large number of borewells have run dry, or seen a decline in yield. In a bid to protect his sugarcane crop, Lohit of Keragodu sunk two borewells, but both failed. Now, his crop has wilted. "If water was released in March and April, I could have saved my crop and borewells in the area would have been charged."

Farmers whose crops are over nine months old are trying to recover a part of their investment by selling their yet-to-mature cane to jaggery units at a lower price.

"We are buying nine to 10-month-old sugarcane at prices ranging from ₹1,200 to ₹1,900 a tonne. If one tonne of mature cane yields 1.1 quintal of jaggery, this is giving us 70 kg, but not of good quality," said B.C. Venkatesh of SLV Jaggery unit at Bilidegalu.

In the normally dry and partially irrigated Nagamangala, farmers dependent on rain-fed crops have managed to sustain. "Those dependent on irrigation failed this time. But, we got good ragi and horse gram crops," said Jayendra Gowda, former president of the Honakere Gram Panchayat.

The distress has been made acute as dairy farmers are finding it hard to maintain their cows that are already yielding less milk due to extreme heat. For decades, dairy farming has provided a sustainable living. Those who managed paddy have stock of dry grass, but others are forced to purchase at a high cost.

Fodder in short supply

Ravi, a resident of Keelara, sold two of his three cows, as fodder availability has come down. Like thousand of farmers awaiting the release of government subsidy of ₹5 per litre, Gejjelgere farmer Jayakumar said, "The government could have released the subsidy in this time of distress. The last payment came in December 2023."

Govt. has made no changes to OBC matrix, says CM in response to NCBC charge

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Clarifying that his government has not brought any new changes in the OBC reservation matrix, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said that Muslim reservation in the OBC reservation matrix has been there since the 1970s.

Siddaramaiah

In the courts

"Muslims have been part of backward class reservation since the L.G. Havanur Commission Report in 1974. The current Karnataka government has not made any changes to the backward class reservations. The previous government had taken away the 4% BC reservation under category 2B to Muslims and the matter has been pending in the Supreme Court, with the previous Basavaraj Bommai government giving an undertaking that it would not implement the changes during the pendency of the case in the Supreme Court," he said in a note issued here. He was responding to the statement of the National Commission of Backward Classes, which has said that it would summon the Chief Secretary over an alleged "overrepresentation" of Muslims in the postgraduate medical admission during 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

'Politically motivated'

The Chief Minister said: "When the matter stands thus, the NCBC in a politically motivated move has issued a press note on an issue that does not concern it. The law is clear that the State governments have the power to determine their own list of castes and communities to be categorised as backward classes. The NCBC has no role in it."

He said that the NCBC note is "motivated" to create confusion in the State when it is going for election. "It gives the impression that the Congress government of Karnataka has given a new reservation to Muslims. This is a blatant lie. The fact remains that the BC reservation of Muslims has been in existence since March 3, 1977 and it has withstood legal scrutiny." Successive backward class commissions, namely, Havanur, Venkataswamy, Chinnappa Reddy, and Ravi Verma Kumar, have recognised Muslims subject to income ceiling as backward class, and that this has been the position of law, he added.

Meanwhile, the former chairperson of the Karnataka Backward Classes Commission C.S. Dwarakanath said in a release that historically, various commissions, from the pre-Independence Miller Commission, have recognised Muslims as "backward classes" in Karnataka. "Notably, Muslims, along with other religious minorities like Christians, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs, are included in the list of backward classes." It is "unacceptable that the chairman of the NCBC appeared unprepared and uninformed about reservation matters," he said.

Three youths run over by train near Marathahalli

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Three youths were run over by a train near Marathahalli underbridge on Wednesday night.

The deceased have been identified as Shashikumar, 20, Balasubramanyam, 21, and Lokesh, 20, all hailing from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh who were living as paying guests at Marathahalli.

Of them, Lokesh was working as a cab driver, Balasubramanyam was studying in the city, and Shashikumar had recently come to the city in search of a job.

The police said the three victims were taking a stroll after dinner and probably were trying to cross the railway tracks or were walking along them to cross the road and enter the adjoining road near Marathahalli underbridge around 9.30 p.m. when the accident is said to have occurred.

The loco pilot of the Yeshwantpur–Kannur Express called the station master of Byappanahalli Railway Station and alerted him about the accident, following which the Railway Police Control Room was alerted and a search operation was launched. However, they couldn't find the victims in the dark on Wednesday night and the search was called off. The bodies were discovered by railway personnel maintaining the tracks on Thursday morning. The bodies were strewn on the tracks, sources said.

Metro services to start early on Sunday for TCS World 10K Run

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Namma Metro services will start early on Sunday to facilitate public to participate in TCS World 10K Bengaluru scheduled to begin from Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) will commence its train service at 3.35 a.m. instead of 7 a.m. from its four terminal stations Nagasandra, Silk Institute, Challaghatta, and Whitefield (Kadugodi).

According to a release, trains will run at a frequency of 10 minutes from 3.35 a.m. to 4.25 a.m.

From Majestic

The first train service from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station Majestic station towards M.G. Road will be at 4.10 a.m. and thereafter trains will run at a 10-minute interval up to 5 a.m. and subsequently, trains will run depending on the patronage.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 26, we have an In Focus story on the Buddha Vihar in Kalaburagi that will soon introduce post-graduate courses in Pali and Sanskrit languages. It is expected to become the base for pursuing doctoral and postdoctoral courses in Buddhism.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 26, Friday), the following articles are available:

- RBI's draft rules to regulate payment aggregators **bit.ly/rbisdraftregulations**
- In search of skin lightening creams, kidneys take a hit **bit.ly/skinlightning**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

8TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ASHWINI NYAMANNAWAR, W/o Sharanagouda Nyamannawar, R/o Yalwar, Vijayapura, Karnataka –586203 have changed my minor Sons name from SATWIK NYAMANNAWAR to SATWIKK NYAMANAWAR (DOB: 28/11/2016) vide affidavit dated 23/04/2024 sworn before Notary N.THULASI, Bengaluru

I, AMIT Jain Sureshbhai, R/at No.80/818, Ground Floor, 5th Main Road, Vijayanagar, Bangalore-560040, have changed my name from Amit Jain Sureshbhai to Amit Jain vide affidavit dated 24/04/2024 before Notary Y.R.Chandrasekar, Bangalore.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ASHWINI NYAMANNAWAR, W/o Sharanagouda Nyamannawar, R/o Yalwar, Vijayapura, Karnataka –586203 have changed my minor Sons name from SAMARTH NYAMANNAWAR to SAMMARTTH NYAMANNAWAR (DOB: 26/12/2013) vide affidavit dated 23/04/2024 sworn before Notary N.THULASI, Bengaluru

I, KIRTHI Sreeramulu, R/a No.109, Srikara Nivasam, 13th Cross, Freedom Fighter colony, Bangalore-560058 have changed my name to Kirthi Dilip vide affidavit dt: 25.04.2024 sworn before Notary Smt.A.Manjula, B'luru

EDUCATIONAL

GENERAL

ANTHRO

Abhinav Jain
AIR 35

With the continuous support and guidance of Vaid Sir and Team, I am able to continuously score good marks in Anthropology i.e. 294(2021) & 287(2023). It plays an important role in my selection both the times.

Abhinav Jain, AIR 35, IAS`24

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH 20)
O.S. NO. 25135/2023
BETWEEN:
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED MITTAL TOWER, M. G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001 Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder Ms. Mansi Singh Aged about 24 years D/o Anil Kumar Singh ...PLAINTIFF
AND:
1. MRS. SWETHA. M D/o Narayanappa Muniraj Aged Major, No. 273, 3rd Cross, Venkatala, Bangalore- 560 064.
...DEFENDANT
Summons to Defendant

Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 5,66,458.42/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Eight Paisa Forty Two Only)** apart from future interest of 10.85% p.a., in **O.S. No. 25135/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 20**, Before Addl., City Civil Court, Mayohall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **15th Day of June, 2024** at **11 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **20th** day of **April, 2024.**

By the order of court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court, Mayohall
BENGALURU- 560 001

FX & Co.,
ADVOCATES,
New NO. 99, OLD NO.11/1
Gover Road, Cox Town,
BENGALURU- 560 005.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE XXII ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-07)
O.S. No. 6725/2022
Hg. 16/07/2024
Between:
M/s. ICICI Bank Limited, having its registered office at: Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007, having its head office at and Zonal office at : 4/10, My three Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur Main Road, Bengaluru- 560068 And also having Branch at MG Road, Bengaluru, through its Authorised representative Mr. Rohith Ali M. **...Plaintiff**
And:
Mrs. Anjum Taranum
...Defendant
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC

Defendant: Mrs. Anjum Taranum, D/O. Musheer, Aged About 42 Years, Residing #311,19th Main, 6th Block Behind Police Station Koramangala, Opposite to Police Station Bangalore- 560 095.

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of **Rs. 8,34,293.08/-** along with interest at the rate of 24% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the XXII Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H.07), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **16/07/2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 18th day of April, 2024 at Bangalore.

By order of the Court
Assistant Registrar,
Hon'ble City Civil Court,
Bengaluru

Advocate for Plaintiff
B.S. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners,
Advocates,
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A',
3, Queens Road,
Bengaluru -01

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 72nd ADDL' CITY CIVIL JUDGE MAYOHALL UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-73)
O.S NO. 25222/2023
Between
ICICI Bank Limited, Having its registered office at Land Mark, Race Course Circle, Vadodara - 390 007 and having its Corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400 051 and its branch office at Mystree Centre, 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560 068 Represented by its POA Holder Sri. Pramodh Gurumallappa **...Plaintiff**
And
Sri. Aamrutham RG
...Defendant
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT

To,
Sri. Aamrutham R G,
S/o Sri. Ramaiah B C, Aged about 54 years, CIPLA Ltd., 100, Plot No. 285, 286, 287, Bommasandra, Near Medahalli, Bangalore- 560 049

WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of **Rs. 15,95,839/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Nine Only)** together with interest **@ 24% p.a.,** cost of the suit and to grant such other or further order relief. The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble 72nd Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH-73) in person or through a Counsel who can able to answer the claim made against you on **27/05/2024** at **11:00 A.M.** failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court on this **27/03/2024.**

BY ORDER OF THE HON'BLE COURT
DEPUTY REGISTRAR,
CITY CIVIL COURT,
MAYOHALL UNIT,
BANGALORE

ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF
SA Associates,
No.10, 7th Cross,
Victoria Layout,
Bangalore - 560 047

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE LX ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-61)
O.S No. 6143/2023
BETWEEN:
ICICI BANK LIMITED, having its registered office at: Landmark, Race-Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007, and branch office at: 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli, Hosur main road, Bengaluru- 560 068 through its authorised representative Mr. Harish E ...Plaintiff
AND:
Mr. Chandan Kumar Singh, ...Defendant
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF CPC
Defendant:
Mr. Chandan Kumar Singh
S/o Sahat Lal Singh
Aged about 39 years,
R/at. No. 150, Shantha Bai, 17th Main, 5th Cross, HMT Layout, Near Bus Stop, Mathikere, Bengaluru Karnataka- 560 054.
Pan No.: BNRPS1118N
Ph: 9980454858/8088795858
Email ID: Chand352@gmail.com

Whereas the plaintiff above named has instituted the above suit for recovery of money for sum of Rs. 5,68,936.10/- along with interest at the rate of 24% P.A. against you, and you are summoned to appear before the LX Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge at Bengaluru (C.C.H-61), in person or by a pleader, on the day of **01/06/2024** at **11:00 AM** to answer the claim, failing to which the suit would be disposed of Ex-Parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 10th day of April, 2024 at Bangalore.

By order of the court
Assistant Registrar,
Hon'ble Civil Court,
Bengaluru

Advocate For Plaintiff
BS. Jeevan Kumar
Vidhii Partners,
Advocates,
No. 701, Queens Corner 'A',
3, Queens Road,
Bengaluru- 01.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE IV ADDL' CITY CIVIL JUDGE MAYOHALL UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-21)
O.S NO. 25368/2023
Between
ICICI Bank Limited, Having its registered office at Land Mark, Race Course Circle, Vadodara- 390 007 and having its Corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051 and its branch office at Mystree Centre, 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore - 560 068 Represented by its Collection Manager & POA Holder Sri. Pramodh Gurumallappa **...Plaintiff**
And
Sri. Akash Singh**...Defendant**
SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT

To,
Sri. Akash Singh,
S/o Sri. Ranjeet Prasad Singh, Aged about 34 years, No.102, of LR New City, Regency, Halehalli, Behind Samuel Public School, Bangalore - 560 036

WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of Rs.4,29,105/- (Rupees Four Lakh Twenty Nine Thousand One Hundred Five Only) together with interest @ 24% p.a., cost of the suit and to grant such other or further order relief. The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble IV Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH-21) in person or through a Counsel who can able to answer the claim made against you on **13/06/2024** at **11.00 a.m.** failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the Hon'ble court on this **13/02/2024.**

BY ORDER OF THE HON'BLE COURT
DEPUTY REGISTRAR,
CITY CIVIL COURT,
MAYOHALL UNIT,
BANGALORE

ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF
SA Associates,
No.10, 7th Cross,
Victoria Layout,
Bangalore - 560 047

Skin lightening creams laden with mercury take a toll on the kidney

Researchers from Kerala have reported a series of cases from Malappuram district where the regular use of fairness creams has been linked to nephrotic syndrome. Heavy metal screening of the blood and urine samples of these patients revealed high levels of mercury, the toxic effects of which are well-known

C. Maya

On the heels of recent news reports on how keratin-based hair-straightening products containing glycolic acid derivatives led to severe kidney injury in women, researchers from Kerala have reported a series of cases wherein the use of fairness creams has been linked to nephrotic syndrome.

In a study published in the latest issue of *Kidney International* ('NELL-1 associated membranous nephropathy linked to skin fairness cream use – insights from an Indian case series'), doctors describe a series of 15 cases of Membranous Nephropathy, reported by Aster MIMS Hospital, Kottakkal, Malappuram district, that were traced to the regular use of fairness creams. Heavy metal screening of the blood and urine samples of these patients revealed high levels of mercury, the toxic effects of which are well-known. An analysis of the fairness creams also showed that these contained high levels of mercury – in some instances, 10,000 times above the permissible limit of 1 ppm.

A skin lightening procedure being done at a beauty salon. S. SIVA SARAVANAN

High proteinuria

Since 2021, Ranjith Narayanan, a nephrologist practising at two busy private hospitals in Kozhikode, had noticed a specific pattern in cases of membranous nephropathy diagnosed amongst his patients. They all had non-specific symptoms – fatigue, mild edema and frothy urine – but high levels of proteinuria, in the range of 6.5-22.2 g/day.

Membranous nephropathy (MN) is an autoimmune disease resulting in nephrotic syndrome, a condition when too much protein is released into the urine (proteinuria), ultimately resulting in renal failure. In approximately 70% to 80% of cases of MN, the target antigen has been phospholipase A-2 (PLA2R). However, in early 2023, when four or five cases of MN with a similar profile turned up consecutively in OP clinics, Dr. Narayanan and his colleagues decided to dig deeper. In this instance, most of the MN cases turned out to be PLA2R negative.

Recently, another antigen, Neural epidermal growth factor-like protein 1 (NELL-1), has been linked to a rare form of MN. A lab in Chennai identified all these patients to be positive for NELL-1. "In Tamil Nadu, most cases of MN caused by NELL-1 have been traced to use of traditional medicines, most of which have high levels of mercury. But all our patients denied using any indigenous medicines. The link between face creams containing mercury and nephrotic syndrome is well-established worldwide, which naturally led us to probe the use of cosmetics," says Dr. Narayanan.

Fairness cream

The patients admitted to fairly regular usage of fairness creams before they began experiencing non-specific or subtle symptoms. The research team then began prospectively evaluating all cases of MN and they also revisited cases from the past two years. Their study reports 15 cases of MN linked to NELL-1 and in 13 cases, patients had a history of use of fairness creams, most of which were unregulated brands offering rapid results and sold rampantly in local shops and on online platforms.

The key to limiting further kidney damage was recognising the actual cause of nephrotic syndrome by diligently focussing on the patient's clinical history. The mercury levels in blood/urine samples dropped within three months of the patients stopping the use of their fairness creams. Also, all patients responded well to RAAS (renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system) blockade (the gold standard therapy for chronic kidney disease) and did not need immunosuppression.

"Our patients were lucky that we pinpointed the incriminating agent (fairness creams) early, so that renal function could be preserved in all patients and complete remission was possible within 6-11 months," says Dr Narayanan.

> An analysis of the fairness creams showed that these contained high levels of mercury — in some instances, 10,000 times above the permissible limits of 1 ppm

The obsession with fair skin and the use of skin lightening products extends well beyond India and is said to be widely prevalent in African and Asian countries. However, despite widespread use, the serious systemic health issues that toxic cosmetic creams can induce are yet to be perceived as a global public health issue.

Impact of mercury

Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal which is used in fairness/anti-ageing creams as in its inorganic form (mercury salts) it can inhibit the formation of melanin resulting in a lighter skin tone. The higher the levels of mercury in face creams, the better the whitening effect. This is naturally perceived as the product's effectiveness by gullible consumers, who become loyal customers of the product.

Chronic mercury poisoning from cosmetics is often missed because different organs and tissues respond differently to mercury, resulting in atypical clinical presentations. Physicians need to be made more aware of the possibility of mercury poisoning when patients present with non-specific symptoms like pain, fatigue, cognitive decline or systemic issues like membranous nephropathy. However, the concept of equating beauty with fair skin is so ingrained in the minds of people that even after abundant cautioning, they are reluctant to stop the use of fairness creams, doctors say.

The larger public is unaware that mercury in face creams can be absorbed through the sweat glands, sebaceous glands, and hair follicles and absorbed by all tissues. Repeated topical use results in systemic toxicity, manifesting as damage to the kidneys and nervous system. The other adverse effects listed by WHO include skin discolouration and scarring, reduction in the skin's resistance to bacterial and fungal infections, anxiety, depression, psychosis and peripheral neuropathy. "We find that there is little acceptance from people to stop the use of a particular face cream because as soon as they stop using it, the skin becomes dark again.

Changing the attitude of society about skin colour is thus the larger challenge," Dr. Narayanan says. The Minamata Convention on Mercury, to which India is a signatory, is a global treaty "to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds" and it has been in force since 2017.

According to a new Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) report released in October 2023, despite being banned by a global treaty, mercury-containing skin lightening products are still sold by some of the world's biggest online retailers to unsuspecting consumers. It said that of the 213 fairness products from 12 countries purchased and tested by NGOs, 191 (90%) had mercury concentrations ranging from 1.18 to 74,800.00 ppm of mercury, way above the 1 ppm limit mandated for cosmetics by many governments as well as the Minamata Convention.

"The strength of the current study was that it could establish the temporal relationship between the use of fairness creams and the occurrence of nephrotic syndrome. However, larger, multi-centric systemic studies on chronic mercury poisoning are required not just to understand the extent of the problem but also to persuade policy makers and regulators to clamp down on all cosmetics containing mercury at all," the researchers say.

(maya.c@thehindu.co.in)

THE GIST

- A nephrologist in Kozhikode noticed a specific pattern in cases of membranous nephropathy diagnosed amongst his patients. They all had high levels of proteinuria, in the range of 6.5-22.2 g/day
- Patients admitted to regular usage of fairness creams before they began experiencing non-specific or subtle symptoms. Most patients had a history of use of fairness creams, most of which were unregulated brands offering rapid results
- People are unaware that mercury in face creams can be absorbed through the sweat glands, sebaceous glands, and hair follicles and absorbed by all tissues. Repeated topical use results in systemic toxicity, manifesting as damage to the kidneys

BIG SHOT

Service d'Aide Medicale Urgente (SAMU - Urgent Medical assistance Services) employees participate in a training exercise at the Environmental and Neuro-sensory Simulation Center (SENS) in Toulouse, France. The aim is to expose health professionals through simulation to the environmental, sensory and emotional stimuli prevalent in a crisis and train them to cope with it all. SENS can simulate the most realistic scenarios possible. AFP

Rising incidence of IBD cases across the globe is a cause for concern, say experts

Serena Josephine M.

The rising incidence of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) across the globe has become a concern for doctors. While early diagnosis is lacking, diagnosis in itself is challenging considering that other conditions could mimic IBD.

"IBD is a significant problem. It comprises Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease and is characterised by inflammation. It is different from Irritable Bowel Syndrome which is predominantly non-inflammatory," Jonathan Leighton, president, American College of Gastroenterology, USA, said.

"Both Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease are complex immune-mediated diseases; there is a dysregulated immune response. We do believe there are genetic markers that contribute to the disease but not in isolation. There is a synergy between the external environment and gut bacteria," he added. There is an increasing incidence of IBD across the globe. including in North America and western Europe. "The prevalence is also rising... From 0.5% right now, the prevalence will increase to 0.6% in America," he said.

Early onset

There is also a rise in early onset cases among those under 18. For the Indian perspective, Vineet Ahuja, Professor of Gastroenterology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, has pinpointed a challenge in diagnosing Crohn's disease. "We have peculiar issues such as intestinal tuberculosis, which is common in India and resembles Crohn's disease. The phenotype is very similar, and so is the clinical presentation. As a result, the challenge is greater," he said.

On incidence in India, Dr. Ahuja observed that lifestyle changes have contributed. "What was an uncommon condition three decades ago has become more common. Changes in lifestyle, a Westernised diet with high fat and high sugar, processed and packaged food cause an insult to the gut epithelium, precipitating inflammation."

T. S. Chandrasekar, founder and chief gastroenterologist, MedIndia Hospitals and Academy, and the Governor of American College of Gastroenterology, India region, said the incidence of IBD has almost doubled in India from 1990 to 2019, with a rise in the death rate as well.

A study in Tamil Nadu showed that there were more cases of Crohn's Disease than Ulcerative Colitis. Nearly 50% of IBD were Crohn's Disease and 40% were Ulcerative Colitis. It is important to catch patients early so treatment is better, he said.

Dr. Leighton noted that there is still a delay in diagnosis, particularly among the young. "The symptoms of IBD overlap with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. This does delay diagnosis. Individuals with alarming symptoms such as bleeding and severe abdominal pain need a complete evaluation," he said.

Delay in diagnosis

There are other diseases that mimic IBD, and there is a need to rule out infections. "There is no single diagnostic test for Ulcerative Colitis or Crohn's Disease. It is a combination of a physical, laboratory, and endoscopy. We have come a long way in the treatment of IBD. Over the last 25 years, biological therapy has emerged that uses monoclonal antibodies directed at inflammatory pathways. Biologics have been developed to target different parts of the inflammatory pathways to control the disease thereby decreasing hospital stays and surgeries. In addition, we have developed small molecules that can be given orally that have had a significant impact."

Both stressed that the cost was a challenge. "There is no cure. It is a lifelong disease. So, in India, we are looking at low cost therapy such as faecal microbiota transplantation along with regular medication," Dr. Ahuja added.

Environmental factors play a big role in IBD, Dr. Leighton said, adding: "This includes smoking and antibiotics. There are no human studies that have proved the role of diet, but we do think some foods such as super processed foods have the potential to be pro-inflammatory. A healthy diet avoiding highly processed food, and consuming wholesome food – for instance a Mediterranean diet – is recommended."

Dr. Ahuja said patients are advised to avoid being restrictive about their diet as they could become malnourished. "Avoid processed foods. We have an anti-inflammatory diet of curd and buttermilk, and less milk, more rice and millets, fruits, and vegetables. Avoid red meat and consume fish. This seems to be helpful," he said.

(Serena.m@thehindu.co.in)

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96 RANK — MANOJ SOHAN GAJULA Appl.No. 240310529661
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Below 100 All-India Open Category Ranks — 25
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J BG-BGE

Timings
BENGALURU

FRIDAY, APR. 26		
RISE	06:01	SET 18:34
RISE	20:43	SET 07:26
SATURDAY, APR. 27		
RISE	06:01	SET 18:34
RISE	21:41	SET 08:15
SUNDAY, APR. 28		
RISE	06:00	SET 18:34
RISE	22:39	SET 09:09

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	37	26
Mysuru	37	24
Bengaluru	37	25

Bengaluru Today
37°C Weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night also will be comfortable.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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THE HINDU
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HC upholds tune prescribed by govt. to sing State anthem in specified places

Prescribing a particular raaga/tune for singing the State anthem in specified places such as schools and officials events of the government and its agencies, cannot be termed as either arbitrary or unreasonable, says the High Court

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Prescribing a particular raaga/tune for singing the Naada Geethe (State anthem), Jaya Bharatha Jananiya Tanujaate, in specified places such as schools and officials events of the government and its agencies, cannot be termed as either arbitrary or unreasonable, the High Court of Karnataka has said.

Condition to sing the State anthem in a particular tune does not amount to unreasonable restriction as it is not universal in the sense that everyone, everywhere and at every time, if one desires to sing this song, has to do it in the State government specified tune, the court said, while pointing out that the condition is confined only to specified places like all types of schools, and official events of the government and its agencies.

Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the order while dismissing a petition filed by singer Kikkeri Krishna Murthy. The petitioner had questioned the legality of the State government's September 25, 2022, notification prescribing that the State anthem should be sung in the tune composed by the late Mysore Ananthaswamy within the time limit of two minutes and 30 seconds without any repetitions or aalapas.

The court noted that the government's notification does not impinge the petitioner or others to sing this song, penned by Rashtrakavi Kuvempu, in any tune of their choice at any time except in specified places on specified occasions.

"If singing the national anthem, Jana Gana Mana, in a particular tune is imperative, drawing an analogy from the same one can without the risk of contradiction state that singing the State anthem in a specified raaga cannot be faltered," the court observed while noticing that the government has fixed the tune for singing the State anthem at specified places based on a recommendation made by a panel of experts.

"The petitioner could not demonstrate his right to sing the State anthem in specified places like schools and functions of the government and its bodies in a tune composed by late C. Ashwath or such other stalwarts, in variance with the one specified," the court said. The petitioner had contended that Ananthaswamy had not composed the full tune to the anthem but had been singing in the full tune composed by Ashwath.

Five arrested for kidnap and rape of 23-year-old woman

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Grounds police have arrested five persons in a case where a 23-year-old government employee was allegedly kidnapped from the city, taken to Chitradurga, and raped.

The incident happened three days ago. The victim had booked a cab to go to her office around 8 a.m. However, a gang of four men who came in a car allegedly kidnapped her and sped away. She was taken to Chitradurga, where she was kept at a lodge and raped by her collegemate, who had been forcing her to marry him.

The accused had reportedly professed love and had been pestering her to marry him for a few months now. But the victim had turned down his offer.

Flees from lodge
The victim said she fled the lodge in Chitradurga and reached her home a day later and narrated her ordeal to her family, following which she lodged a complaint with the High Grounds police.

The police arrested five people and they have been charged with kidnap and conspiracy, while the main accused has also been charged with rape.

Minor boy killed during Karaga procession

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A minor boy was killed over a trivial issue during the Karaga procession near Annamma temple at Majestic in the wee hours of Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Sarathi, 17, a resident of V.V. Giri Colony, Seshadripuram. He was a school dropout and was working as a construction labourer, the police said.

Sarathi was waiting near Annamma temple with some of his friends to catch a glimpse of the Karaga procession.

Around 3.30 a.m., all the youths were dancing to the beats of drums near the temple and a tiff broke out between Sarathi's group and another group, as Sarathi brushed against them while dancing. Soon, it went out of hand and the gang stabbed Sarathi and fled from the scene, the police said. Sarathi was rushed to Victoria Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on Wednesday evening.

JEE 2024 (Main) Session-2: Three students from State achieve 100 percentile

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Sainavaneet Mukund

Sanvi Jain

Amogh Agrawal

Three students from Karnataka have achieved 100 percentile in the Joint Entrance Examination 2024 (JEE Main), Session-2 of paper 1.

Sanvi Jain, a student from The Deens Academy, Whitefield, Bengaluru; Sainavaneeth Mukund from Vagdevi Vilas School, Marathahalli, and Amogh Agrawal from Narayana Co-Kaveri Bhavan, HSR Layout, have scored out-of-out marks in the JEE (Main) Session-2 and emerged as State toppers.

Amogh had achieved 100 percentile in JEE-2024 (Main), Session-1 for paper 1 and he was the only student from the State to achieve the feat. At present, he is preparing for JEE (Advanced) and hopes to get into IIT-Bombay.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Amogh said, "I try to allot around 12 hours a day to studying and also take sufficient breaks." He added that his key to scoring well is "just following my teachers" advice, the methods they teach us to apply for studying and to improve our scores, and putting in genuine efforts."

Sanvi said, "In JEE (Main) Session-1, I had scored 99.99% marks. I am very proud that I am among the two girls who achieved 100 percentile among 56 candidates list. Hard work, consistency, and revising the syllabus continuously are the key to success."

International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) silver medallist Sainavaneeth Mukund intends to join IIT-Bombay for computer science engineering. "I had scored 99.989 marks in JEE (Main) Session-1. Now I am preparing for JEE (Advanced) and I want to do research in computer science after my graduation," he said.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the results of JEE Main 2024, Session-2, for the entrance of professional courses like BE/B.Tech in premier technical institutions like Indian Institute Technologies.

56 candidates
This year, including two girls, a total of 56 candidates secured 100 percentile. Telangana has the highest number of top scorers – 15 students. Following this, seven students each from Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and five students from Rajasthan secured 100 percentile.

The JEE Main 2024 Session-2 for paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.) was conducted by NTA from April 4 to 9. A total of 10,67,959 candidates appeared for the examination conducted at 544 centres in 291 cities, including 21 cities outside India.

Three masked men brandish pistol, rob doctor of ₹40 lakh worth valuables

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A group of three masked men brandished a pistol and robbed a doctor of valuables worth ₹40 lakh at Sahakarnagar on Wednesday night. The accused were inter-State robbers, the police suspect.

It may be recalled that a gang of four masked men similarly brandished pistols and tried to rob a jewellery store at Kodigehalli, not far from where the doctor was robbed on Wednesday. The gang shot at two persons when they resisted the robbery bid in March. The gang of four was caught in Gwalior for being involved in the case. They had robbed a jewellery store in Mumbai a week before the incident in Bengaluru.

On Wednesday around 8.20 p.m, Dr. Umashankar was alone at home and had gone to a street corner shop without locking his house's main door as the shop was just a few blocks away. When he returned home, he saw a masked youth standing in the hall and when the doctor asked who he was, he called another man who came out of the room brandishing a pistol and another man came from the first floor holding a bag. In his complaint, Dr. Umashankar said he tried to flee the house and lock it from outside.

However, the masked man with a pistol threatened to kill him if he tried to lock them up and dragged him into a room and locked him instead.

Dr. Umashankar said he came out of the room after some time by opening the lock and found that the gang had fled. He said when he went upstairs, he saw all the wardrobes ransacked and 500 grams of gold ornaments, ₹20 lakh in cash cash, and six Swiss watches, together worth ₹40 lakh missing.

The Kodigehalli police have booked a case. The police suspect there was a fourth member of the gang waiting outside in a car and they were from outside the State as they were speaking in Hindi. A senior official said they had some leads .

Biker killed in accident on Mysuru Road

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A biker was killed in an accident when he rammed his vehicle into a truck in front of him on Mysuru Road on Wednesday night.

The deceased has been identified as Bhojaraju, 23. His friend Karthik, 20, who was riding pillion on the bike, escaped with minor injuries.

Overspeeding
The duo were coming from NICE Road and on Mysuru Road, Bhojaraju was allegedly overspeeding and lost control of the bike.

He rammed his bike into the truck in front of him.

As he was not wearing a helmet, he sustained severe head injuries, and was killed on the spot.

The Jnana Bharathi traffic police have registered a case.

Telgi's daughter accuses advocate of betraying trust

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Sana Talikoti, daughter of Karim Telgi, who was convicted of large-scale stamp paper scam, has said that her advocate has cheated her family.

"We have sent a written complaint to the Karnataka Bar Council asking it to disqualify S.K. Nandagadi as he transferred some of her father's property to her uncle for some consideration," she said.

"My father (Telgi) had invested money to buy six acres of land in the name of my uncle Abdul Azeem. Mr. Nandagadi had all our property documents," she added, speaking to reporters in her native town of Khanapur on Thursday. Meanwhile, Mr. Nandagadi said, "All allegations against me are false. I will reply to the notice.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of patents granted in India in FY24

1.03 in lakh. Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks Unnat Pandit shared that 40% of applications were disposed of within 30 months of the request for examination. PTI

Despite uncertainties, rise in service exports in India in 2023

11.4 in percentage. India's services exports jumped to $345 billion, while China's shipments from the sector contracted by 10.1% to $381 billion, according to a UNCTAD report. PTI

The number of pilot whales rescued from Australian coast

134 About 160 long-finned pilot whales beached on the western Australian coast near Dunsborough. Despite efforts to return many to sea, 26 died at Toby's Inlet. AP

Candidates to achieve 100 NTA score in JEE-Main

56 A record number of candidates, including two females, achieved 100 NTA scores in the engineering entrance exam JEE-Main, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced. PTI

Amount imposed by SC on Centre for frivolous petitions

5 in ₹ lakh. The Supreme Court has imposed the fine on the Centre for challenging a Meghalaya High Court order, holding it was "sheer abuse" of the process of law. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

RBI's draft rules for payment aggregators

Will non-bank payment aggregators need separate authorisation from the RBI? What lessons did the RBI incorporate from the Paytm Payments Bank crisis? What will happen to non-banking entities currently engaged in point-of-sale activities if they fail to comply with the RBI's approval-seeking timeframe?

EXPLAINER

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

Following its announcement in June 2022 that it will seek better regulation of offline payment aggregators (PAs) facilitating proximity or face-to-face transactions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) floated two consultation papers earlier this month. The first deals with activities of offline PAs, while the second proposes to strengthen the ecosystem's safety by expanding instructions for Know Your Customer (KYC), due diligence of onboarded merchants and operations in Escrow accounts. The RBI has invited comments/feedback by May 31.

What exactly are the norms about?

Payment aggregators are entities that settle payments from customers to merchants – unburdening the latter from creating a payment integration system of their own. The existing guidelines cover their activities in e-commerce sites and other online avenues. The latest draft guidelines propose to extend these regulations to offline spaces, entailing proximity or face-to-face transactions. The RBI observed back in June 2022 that the nature of activities carried out by the PAs, both online and offline, is similar. It aspires to bring in "synergy in regulation covering activities and operations of PAs apart from convergence on standards of data collection and storage."

The proposed norms incorporate lessons from what happened this year with Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) – albeit in an unrelated space. With the expansion of the scope of operations of PAs, the RBI appears to be strengthening the ecosystem against any opacity. The PPBL crisis was triggered by, among other things, major irregularities in the bank's KYC adherence. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND) had imposed a penalty of ₹5.49 crore having found that PPBL "engaged in a number of illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling." It added that the money generated from it was "routed and channelled through bank accounts maintained by these (illegal) entities" with the PPBL.

Regulatory shift: To track transactions, entities would be allowed to store limited data. GETTY IMAGES

Is registration with the RBI being made compulsory?

The primary focus here is on non-bank PAs and within them, the offline extensions. Banks providing physical PA services would not require any separate authorisation from the RBI. They are only expected to comply with the revised instructions within three months after they are issued.

Non-banking entities providing PA services at the point of sale (PoS), that is, offline, would have to inform the RBI within 60 days (after the circular is issued), about their intent to seek authorisation.

The entities would, however, be allowed to continue their operations. As for non-banking entities providing PA services online – both those authorised and whose applications are pending – would be required to seek approval, about their existing offline PA activity, from the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems and the regulator within 60 days of the directions being mandated. This would also apply to any authorised non-banking entity aspiring to enter the online and/or offline PA space in the future.

The RBI's directions also stipulate that entities currently engaged in PoS activities must ensure they adhere to guidelines on merchant on-boarding, customer grievance redressal and dispute management, baseline technology recommendations, security, fraud prevention and risk management framework as per the previous framework within 3 months. For entities that would require fresh registration, the RBI has said continued adherence to existing guidelines framed in 2020 would be viewed positively while processing the applications.

Does it talk about provisions for sustainability?

The RBI proposes that non-banking entities currently providing proximity/face-to-face transaction services have a minimum net worth of ₹15 crore when they apply. This would be extended to ₹25 crore by March 31, 2028. The requirements are the same for new applicants, the difference being that a ₹25 crore net worth requirement would apply at the end of third financial year from when the authorisation is granted.

The RBI has proposed that existing offline operators unable to comply with the approval-seeking timeframe wind up their operations by July 31, 2025. Banks will also be directed to close all accounts by the end of October next year should they fail to produce evidence of their application seeking authorisation.

What about KYC requirements?

The regulations aim to ensure that onboarded merchants do not collect and settle funds for services not offered on their platforms. While KYC is already mandatory, the regulations seek to make the provisions more nuanced.

The RBI's proposed instructions categorise merchants into small and medium merchants. Small merchants would constitute physical merchants with an annual business turnover of less than ₹5 lakh who are not registered under the GST regime. The regulator proposes that the PAs undertake 'contact point verification', that is, collect information physically to establish the existence of the firm. They must also verify the bank accounts in which their funds are settled. Medium merchants, defined as physical or online merchants with annual business turnover of less than ₹40 lakhs who are not registered under the GST, would also have to undergo contact point verification.

The PA would be expected to establish their existence by verifying one official document each of the proprietor, beneficial owner or attorney holder, and of the stated business.

The PAs must ensure that transactions undertaken by their merchants are in line with their business profile. They must assign risk-based payment limits to the merchants. Based on their transaction pattern, the merchant could be migrated to a higher degree of due diligence.

Does it propose storage of card data?

The draft regulations instruct that no entity, other than the card issuer and/or card network, can store data for proximity/face-to-face payments from August 1, 2025, and direct them to purge data stored previously. To track transactions and reconcile them, entities would be allowed to store limited data, that is, the last four digits of the card number and the issuer's name.

THE GIST

- The Reserve Bank of India is proposing new regulations for offline payment aggregators (PAs) to enhance safety.
- The proposed norms aim to extend existing guidelines to cover offline transactions and strengthen Know Your Customer requirements for merchants.
- The draft regulations instruct that no entity, other than the card issuer and/or card network, can store data for proximity/face-to-face payments from August 1, 2025.

Why does the Centre want to modify the 2G spectrum verdict?

Why does the Centre want the apex court to revisit its decade-old 2G spectrum scam verdict? Is the allocation of scarce natural resources like spectrum through auction the only way to ensure transparency?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

More than a decade after the Supreme Court cancelled 122 telecom licenses in the landmark 2G spectrum scam judgment, the Union government has moved an application to allocate spectrum administratively, bypassing auctions. An administrative allocation would give the government control over the selection of operators. On Monday, Attorney General R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre made a plea for urgent listing of the application before Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud. The development comes a month after the Delhi High Court admitted the CBI's appeal against the acquittal of former Union Telecom Minister A. Raja and other high-profile politicians in the scam.

What is the 2G spectrum scam?

The alleged 2G spectrum allocation scam is said to have originated in 2008 when the then Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government sold 122 2G licences on a first-come-first-serve (FCFS) basis to specific telecom operators. In its charge sheet filed in April 2011, the CBI alleged that there was a loss of ₹ 30,984 crore to the exchequer as a result of discrepancies in the allocation process.

In the meantime, the Centre for Public Interest Litigation and Subramanian Swamy filed petitions in the top Court alleging a ₹70,000 crore scam in the grant of telecom licenses in 2008. In February 2012, a division Bench of the Supreme Court cancelled the licenses while cautioning that an FCFS basis for the allocation of scarce natural resources can be prone to misuse.

Advocating for competitive auctions instead, the Court said, "In our view, a duly publicised auction conducted fairly and impartially is perhaps the best method for discharging this burden and the methods like first-come-first-served when used for alienation of natural resources/public property are likely to be misused by unscrupulous people who are only interested in garnering maximum financial benefit and have no respect for the constitutional ethos and values." It emphasised that the burden lies on the State to ensure that the "non-discriminatory method" of the auction is adopted "by giving wide publicity so that all eligible persons can participate in the process".

What is the Centre's plea?

In its plea, the Centre has pointed out that the assignment of spectrum is required to discharge sovereign and public interest functions such as security, safety, and disaster preparedness. The Centre elaborated that administrative allocation is required when demand is lower than supply or for space communication. In such cases, it would be "more optimal and efficient for spectrum to be shared by multiple players, rather than being broken up into smaller blocks for the sole purpose of exclusive assignment", it said.

The Court was apprised that following its 2012 ruling, the administrative assignment of non-commercial spectrum has been on a purely interim basis, subject to the government's final decision on pricing and policy. However, it was now time to "firm up a spectrum assignment framework in suitable cases to best subserve the common good", the government said. Accordingly, the plea envisages the following prayer – "(a) Issue appropriate clarifications that the government may consider the assignment of spectrum through the administrative process if so determined through due process in accordance with the law, and if such assignment is in pursuit of governmental functions or the public interest so requires, or auction may not be preferred due to technical or economic reasons". The Union government has also placed reliance on the observations made by a Constitution Bench while deciding a Presidential reference concerning the February 2012 verdict. The Bench pointed out that the auction method prescribed in the verdict was not to be considered a "constitutional mandate" for the alienation of natural resources excluding spectrum.

What is the significance of the new telecom law?

The Telecommunications Act, 2023, passed by the Parliament last year empowers the government to assign spectrum for telecommunication through administrative processes other than auction for entities listed in the First Schedule. These include entities engaged in national security, defence, and law enforcement as well as Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellites such as Space X, and Bharti Airtel-backed OneWeb. The government can also assign part of a spectrum that has already been assigned to one or more additional entities, known as secondary assignees, and even terminate assignments where a spectrum or a part of it has remained underutilised for insufficient reasons.

THE GIST

- More than a decade after the Supreme Court cancelled 122 telecom licenses in the landmark 2G spectrum scam judgment, the Union government has moved an application for a "certain class" of spectrum to be allocated through administrative processes.
- The alleged 2G spectrum allocation scam is said to have originated in 2008 when the then Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government sold 122 2G licences on a first-come-first-serve (FCFS) basis to specific telecom operators.
- The law passed by the Parliament last year empowers the government to assign spectrum for telecommunication through administrative processes other than auction for entities listed in the First Schedule.

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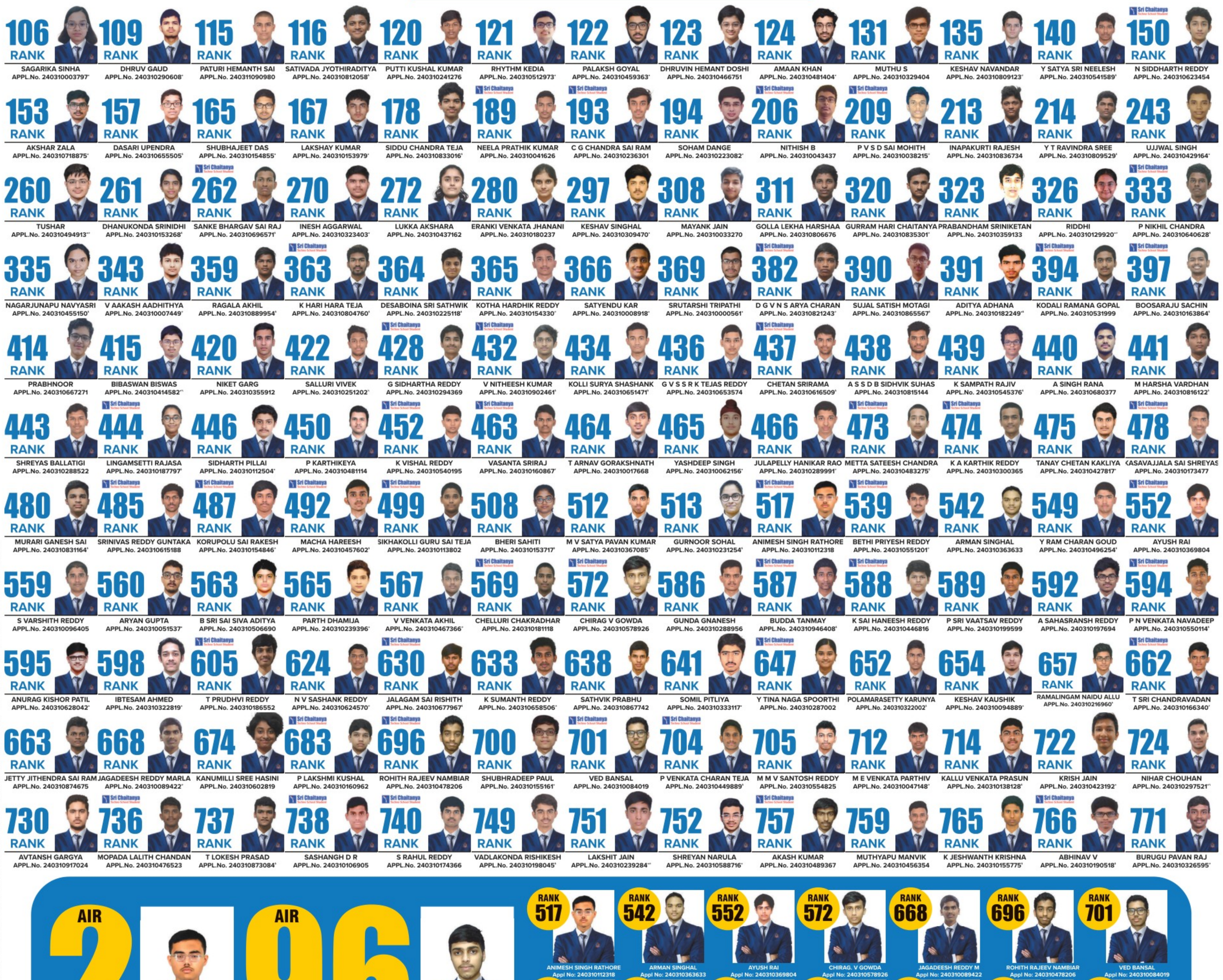
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382 RANK D G V N S ARYA CHARAN APPL.No. 240310821243**
390 RANK SUJAL SATISH MOTAGI APPL.No. 240310865567*
391 RANK ADITYA ADHANA APPL.No. 240310182249**
394 RANK KODALI RAMANA GOPAL APPL.No. 240310531999
397 RANK BOOSARAJU SACHIN APPL.No. 240310163864*
414 RANK PRABHNOOR APPL.No. 240310667271
415 RANK BIBASWAN BISWAS APPL.No. 240310414582**
420 RANK NIKET GARG APPL.No. 240310355912
422 RANK SALLURI VIVEK APPL.No. 240310251202%
428 RANK G SIDHARTHA REDDY APPL.No. 240310294369
432 RANK V NITHEESH KUMAR APPL.No. 240310902461*
434 RANK KOLLI SURYA SHASHANK APPL.No. 240310651471*
436 RANK G V S S R K TEJAS REDDY APPL.No. 240310653574
437 RANK CHETAN SRIRAMA APPL.No. 240310616509*
438 RANK A S S D B SIDHVIK SUHAS APPL.No. 240310815144
439 RANK K SAMPATH RAJIV APPL.No. 240310545376*
440 RANK A SINGH RANA APPL.No. 240310680377
441 RANK M HARSHA VARDHAN APPL.No. 240310816122*
443 RANK SHREYAS BALLATIGI APPL.No. 240310288522
444 RANK LINGAMSETTI RAJASA APPL.No. 240310187797*
446 RANK SIDHARTH PILLAI APPL.No. 240310112504*
450 RANK P KARTHIKEYA APPL.No. 240310481114
452 RANK K VISHAL REDDY APPL.No. 240310540195
463 RANK VASANTA SRIRAJ APPL.No. 240310160867/
464 RANK T ARNAV GORAKSHNATH APPL.No. 240310017668
465 RANK YASHDEEP SINGH APPL.No. 240310062156*
466 RANK JULAPELLY HANIKAR RAO APPL.No. 240310289991*
473 RANK METTA SATEESH CHANDRA APPL.No. 240310483275*
474 RANK K A KARTHIK REDDY APPL.No. 240310300365
475 RANK TANAY CHETAN KAKLIYA APPL.No. 240310427817*
478 RANK KASAVAJJALA SAI SHREYAS APPL.No. 240310173477
480 RANK MURARI GANESH SAI APPL.No. 240310831164*
485 RANK SRINIVAS REDDY GUNTAKA APPL.No. 240310615188
487 RANK KORUPOLU SAI RAKESH APPL.No. 240310154846*
492 RANK MACHA HAREESH APPL.No. 240310457602*
499 RANK SIKHAKOLLI GURU SAI TEJA APPL.No. 240310113802
508 RANK BHERI SAHITI APPL.No. 240310153717*
512 RANK M V SATYA PAVAN KUMAR APPL.No. 240310367085*
513 RANK GURNOOR SOHAL APPL.No. 240310231254*
517 RANK ANIMESH SINGH RATHORE APPL.No. 240310112318
539 RANK BETHI PRIYESH REDDY APPL.No. 240310551201*
542 RANK ARMAN SINGHAL APPL.No. 240310363633
549 RANK Y RAM CHARAN GOUD APPL.No. 240310496254*
552 RANK AYUSH RAI APPL.No. 240310369804
559 RANK S VARSHITH REDDY APPL.No. 240310096405
560 RANK ARYAN GUPTA APPL.No. 240310051537*
563 RANK B SRI SAI SIVA ADITYA APPL.No. 240310506690
565 RANK PARTH DHAMIJA APPL.No. 240310239396*
567 RANK V VENKATA AKHIL APPL.No. 240310467366*
569 RANK CHELLURI CHAKRADHAR APPL.No. 240310181118
572 RANK CHIRAG V GOWDA APPL.No. 240310578926
586 RANK GUNDA GNANESH APPL.No. 240310288956
587 RANK BUDDA TANMAY APPL.No. 240310946408*
588 RANK K SAI HANEESH REDDY APPL.No. 240310446816
589 RANK P SRI VAATSAV REDDY APPL.No. 240310199599
592 RANK A SAHASRANSH REDDY APPL.No. 240310197694
594 RANK P N VENKATA NAVADEEP APPL.No. 240310550114*
595 RANK ANURAG KISHOR PATIL APPL.No. 240310628042*
598 RANK IBTESAM AHMED APPL.No. 240310322819*
605 RANK T PRUDHVI REDDY APPL.No. 240310186552
624 RANK N V SASHANK REDDY APPL.No. 240310624570*
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638 RANK SATHVIK PRABHU APPL.No. 240310867742
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647 RANK Y TINA NAGA SPOORTHI APPL.No. 240310287002
652 RANK POLAMARASETTY KARUNYA APPL.No. 240310322002*
654 RANK KESHAV KAUSHIK APPL.No. 240310094889*
657 RANK RAMALINGAM NAIDU ALLU APPL.No. 240310216960*
662 RANK T SRI CHANDRAVADAN APPL.No. 240310166340*
663 RANK JETTY JITHENDRA SAI RAM APPL.No. 240310874675
668 RANK JAGADEESH REDDY MARLA APPL.No. 240310089422*
674 RANK KANUMILLI SREE HASINI APPL.No. 240310602819
683 RANK P LAKSHMI KUSHAL APPL.No. 240310160962
696 RANK ROHITH RAJEEV NAMBIAR APPL.No. 240310478206
700 RANK SHUBHRADEEP PAUL APPL.No. 240310155161*
701 RANK VED BANSAL APPL.No. 240310084019
704 RANK P VENKATA CHARAN TEJA APPL.No. 240310449889*
705 RANK M M V SANTOSH REDDY APPL.No. 240310554825
712 RANK M E VENKATA PARTHIV APPL.No. 240310047148**
714 RANK KALLU VENKATA PRASUN APPL.No. 240310138128*
722 RANK KRISH JAIN APPL.No. 240310423192*
724 RANK NIHAR CHOUHAN APPL.No. 240310297521**
730 RANK AVTANSH GARGYA APPL.No. 240310917024
736 RANK MOPADA LALITH CHANDAN APPL.No. 240310476523
737 RANK T LOKESH PRASAD APPL.No. 240310873084*
738 RANK SASHANGH D R APPL.No. 240310106905
740 RANK S RAHUL REDDY APPL.No. 240310174366
749 RANK VADLAKONDA RISHIKESH APPL.No. 240310198045*
751 RANK LAKSHIT JAIN APPL.No. 240310239284**
752 RANK SHREYAN NARULA APPL.No. 240310588716*
757 RANK AKASH KUMAR APPL.No. 240310489367
759 RANK MUTHYAPU MANVIK APPL.No. 240310456354
765 RANK K JESHWANTH KRISHNA APPL.No. 240310155775*
766 RANK ABHINAV V APPL.No. 240310190518*
771 RANK BURUGU PAVAN RAJ APPL.No. 240310326595*

Note: The information is as per students feedback

This advertisement could be brought to our notice

AIR 2 ANIMESH SINGH RATHORE Appl No: 240310112318*
AIR 96 MANOJ SOHAN GAJULA Appl No: 240310529661
RANK 517 ANIMESH SINGH RATHORE Appl No: 240310112318
RANK 542 ARMAN SINGHAL Appl No: 240310363633
RANK 552 AYUSH RAI Appl No: 240310369804
RANK 572 CHIRAG. V GOWDA Appl No: 240310578926
RANK 668 JAGADEESH REDDY M Appl No: 240310089422
RANK 696 ROHITH RAJEEV NAMBIAR Appl No: 240310478206
RANK 701 VED BANSAL Appl No: 240310084019
RANK 736 M LALITH CHANDAN Appl No: 240310476523
RANK 738 SASHANGH DR Appl No: 240310106905
RANK 757 AKASH KUMAR Appl No: 240310489367
RANK 796 ADITHYA A Appl No: 240310020897
RANK 809 RAHUL RAO Appl No: 240310331334
RANK 824 GAUTHAM TATHANDA Appl No: 240310064589
RANK 836 AYUSH AGARWAL Appl No: 240310615168

*T & C apply | Note: Any inadvertent error published in this

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J BG-BGE

Will Bengaluru buck the trend and come out in large numbers to vote today?

In the 2019 elections, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru Central, and Bengaluru South recorded a turnout of 54.66%, 54.28%, and 53.47%, respectively

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Seats in Bengaluru mostly record the lowest turnout in the State. As the city goes to polls on Friday (April 26), will this change, is the moot question.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru Central, and Bengaluru South recorded a turnout of 54.66%, 54.28%, and 53.47%, respectively, while Bengaluru Rural registered 64.9%. Turnout in urban and rural seats has mostly been less than the State average.

This time, the four Bengaluru seats combined have 1,06,54,390 voters, of whom 54.67 lakh are male voters, 51.85 lakh are female voters, and 1,779 are of other genders. Of them, 1.49 lakh are young voters, most of whom will be exercising their franchise for the first time.

While the city has been electing BJP MPs in all three of its seats since 2009, the rural seat has been a Congress stronghold, the sole seat the party won in 2019. However, all four Bengaluru seats are seeing keen contests this time, and parties have said there is an "open contest", raising interest in the polls.

However, the city has not seen much enthusiasm on the ground, which many fear may lead to low turnout. There are fears that the rising mercury and the polling day being a Friday, leading to a long weekend, may also contribute to low turnout. The contest between Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's brother and sole incumbent Congress MP D.K. Suresh and former director of Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research and son-in-law of H.D. Deve Gowda, C.N. Manjunath, contesting on a BJP ticket, is a high-voltage battle grabbing most eyeballs.

Two-time Udupi Chikkamagaluru BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje is taking on M.V. Rajeev Gowda in Bengaluru North constituency, which has the highest number of voters – 31.74 lakh. Three-time incumbent BJP MP P.C. Mohan is fighting Mansoor Ali Khan of the Congress in Bengaluru Central constituency, while the daughter of senior Congress leader and Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Sowmya Reddy, who lost the 2023 Assembly election from Jayanagar by a narrow margin in a disputed result, is taking on Tejasvi Surya of the BJP in Bengaluru South constituency.

ELECTIONS – PHASE 2

Seats in Karnataka going to the polls: 14

Voter turnout in 2019 in these 14 seats: 64.1%

Total voters: 2,85,42,534

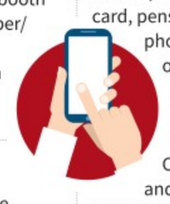
Young voters: 5,21,360

Polling stations: 30,602

Maximum number of polling stations: Bengaluru North 2,911	Minimum number of polling stations: Udupi - Chikkamagaluru 1,842	Total number of candidates 247

HOW TO FIND YOUR POLLING STATION

- Download Chunavana app
- Search for your polling booth based on your EPIC number/ phone number on electoralsearch.eci.gov.in nvsp.nic.in ceokarnataka.kar.nic.in
- Citizens whose names are on the electoral rolls can vote after showing the election identity card or any of the following documents:



Aadhaar, passport, driving licence, PAN card, MNREGA job card, pension document with photograph, bank/post office passbook with photograph, service ID cards with photograph issued by State, Central governments and PSUs

- Voters cannot carry mobile phones into polling booths

HOME VOTING: (VOTES ALREADY CAST)

	Total registered	Votes cast	Turnout (in%)
Persons above 85 years	36,689	35,131	95.75
Persons with disabilities	11,920	11,679	97.98
Total	48,609	46,810	96.3

All set: (From top right) Officials on election duty collected EVMs, VVPAT units, and other materials before heading to their respective polling booths and CRPF personnel waiting to accompany the officials, on a school campus at Rajarajeshwarinagar in Bengaluru on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR

District Election Office has gone all out to boost turnout

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Urban DEO has carried out several activities to create awareness on voting

The District Election Office (DEO) in Bengaluru Urban has carried out several activities to boost voter turnout in the three Lok Sabha constituencies which have traditionally recorded average voting percentages. The election office devised macro- and micro-level SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) activities to influence voters to come out in large numbers, on Friday.

The DEO has directed companies to sanction leave to voters on the polling day, failing which action will be initiated. The Labour Department has been instructed to shut down offices working on Friday. Hoteliers have also been asked to allow workers to exercise their franchise.

Detailing the efforts in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits, District Election Officer Tushar Giri Nath said election officials at every level held hundreds of programmes to reach out to the electorate. At the macro level, the election office roped in youth icons such as movie stars, sportsmen, and corporate leaders to participate in rallies, street marches, and other activities to send out a strong message on the importance of voting.

In colleges

The icons spoke to students in colleges, stressing the need to vote and urged them to pass on the awareness to parents and their friends. The election officials held meetings with resident welfare associations (RWA) of apartment complexes to spread awareness about voting. For the same, in apartment complexes where there are more than 1,000 voters, dedicated booths are being set up to facilitate voting,

Mr. Giri Nath said, hoping that this time people from apartments may come out in large numbers to vote.

Mr. Giri Nath said in the IT corridors, the election officials tied up with IT leaders and held events. "We have asked IT companies to declare a holiday and insist that the employees vote instead of going away, treating this as a long weekend," he said.

Door-to-door awareness

At the micro level, of the 8,984 booths, in about 4,300 booths where voting percentage was poor, intense SVEEP activities were taken up. In about 1,700 booths where the voter turnout was less than 10% or 5%, the election officers went to the houses of the residents and pasted stickers about voting day and the importance of voting, he said. According to the data shared by the BBMP, the officers visited more than 2.9 lakh houses across the city and pasted stickers.

Mr. Giri Nath said the officials spoke to voters in every house and the response was positive. This activity would help increase the percentage and people would come out braving the heat. In most of the booths, drinking water facility will be set up besides providing shelter to provide shade from the scorching heat, he added.

The election office has also set up special booths with themes to promote conservation of water, forest, culture, ayurveda, Yakshagana, and Bengaluru Karaga. There are booths managed only by women, while 28 dedicated booths will be set up for the specially abled.

26 inpatients from private hospital to vote

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a unique initiative, a private hospital here is supporting 26 inpatients to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha election on Friday.

The inpatients, who are under treatment in the eight facilities of Manipal Hospitals on Old Airport Road, Malleswaram, Yeshwanthpur, Miller's Road, Whitefield, Sarjapur, Jayanagar, and Varathur, will be provided transportation and medical assistance to help them exercise their franchise.

A lot done in remote areas to help people

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Chamarajanagar district which has almost 50% of forest cover is a striking example of how elections are conducted to ensure that citizens in remote and inaccessible terrains are not bereft of their rights to exercise their franchise.

For over two months, the Deputy Commissioner of the district C.T. Shilpa Nag, returning officer, and BRT Tiger Reserve Deputy Conservator of Forests Deep Contractor, held discussions to thrash out the arrangements and identify problem areas to ensure smooth polling.

There were polling stations that were in network shadow areas which is where mobile signals cannot be received due to the remoteness of the terrain. Then there are polling booths in areas susceptible to human-animal conflicts.

"After a thorough study of the terrain and the polling stations we listed 78 polling booths to be located in areas coming under conflict zones while 17 booths or stations came under network shadow area," said Ms. Deep Contractor. In such places where mobile signals cannot be received, it was decided to make provision for wireless walkie-talkies of the Forest Department and the local police to the polling officers.

But the more complex issue is conducting the elections inside the forests where there are "podus" or tribal hamlets within the core zone of the BRT Tiger Reserve. In BRT itself there are 57 "podus" or hamlets in core or buffer zones.

It is here that the synergy among different departments comes into the picture. While the EVMs are in the custody of the polling officers, the transportation is undertaken by the Forest Department staff who are familiar and experienced in driving in such terrain where ordinary vehicles do not ply.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL
K. Kamaraj Road, Bangalore - 42
Tel: 080 – 25581238 www.apsbangalore.edu.in

JOB OPPORTUNITIES: TEACHING AND NON TEACHING STAFF ON ADHOC BASIS

Sl.No	Post & Subject	Qualification Required
1	**TGT Science (01 Post)**	Graduate in the subject and BEd with min 50% marks in each. Experienced to teach secondary classes.
2	**PRT – All Subjects (02 Post)**	Graduate in the subject and BEd with min 50% marks in each. Experienced to teach primary classes
3	**PRT : Classical Hindustani / Western Music (01 Post)**	Graduate in the subject with min 50% marks

NON TEACHING

Sl. NO	Post & Subject	Qualification Required
1	**Asst Librarian (01 Post)**	B.Lib. Science or Graduate with diploma in library science from recognized institute and computer literate. Age below 40 years
2	**Science Lab Attendant (01 Post)**	Qualified and Experienced in handling Science Labs (Physics/ Chemistry/Biology). Qualification – 10 + 2 with Science (PCB) and computer literate. Age below 40 years.

Eligibility: (a) **Computer Literacy** is mandatory for all the posts. (b) For sl. No. 01 & 02 preference will be given to candidates qualified in CSB/ OST and CTET or TET exam (c) **Selection Process – through Interviews only for short listed candidates. (d) For sl. No. 01 to 03 enclose Bank Draft of Rs. 100/- (Rupees one hundred only) favoring, ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL** (e) NO TA/DA admissible for interview (f) Proficiency to teach in English is mandatory. (g) Salary is as per AWES norms. (h) For details visit school website. (j) Download **Application Form** from school website: www.apsbangalore.edu.in (k) **No Application will be accepted via e-mail.** Submit filled in **Application Form super scribed on the envelope mentioning the post applied for ("APPLICATION FOR LSB MAY 2024 FOR THE POST OF _____") along with all documents and bank draft by Courier/Post only addressed to the Principal, Army Public School, K. Kamaraj Road, Bangalore-560042 on or before 03 MAY 2024. For any clarification contact: 080-25581238.**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of our client to bring to the notice of the general public that the original sale deed bearing doc No.BMH-1-09892/2011-12 dt 21.02.2012, Book No.1, Stored in CD No.BMHD543 registered in the office of Sub-registrar Bommanahalli, Bangalore is lost.

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned documents, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of property bearing **Apt No 302** in **Second floor, Block C**, in the Project **"GEM REGENCY"**, constructed on Corporation # 5, Nirguna Mandir Extn Division No 68, formerly bearing Sy # 1613,1612,1713, Situated at **Srinivagilu, Begur Hobli, BSTQ**, Measuring : **1914 sq ft (177.81 sqmtrs) of SBA** With One Covered **Car Parking** Space in Basement No 13 & ; **984.890 sq ft UDS.**

D & M Law Associates, Advocates Unit # 404A, Queens Corner Apartment, No.3, Queens Road, Bangalore-560052.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that our Client **Mr. Manjunath B.L.**, intends to purchase the Immovable property more fully described in the schedule Property from its present owner **Mr. Gaurav Sudarsh Kumar,** S/O Late Sudarsh Kumar, No. 302, 3rd Floor, KMG House, Sapthagiri Enclave, Nizampet Road, Medchal, Malkajgiri, Bachpalle, Telangana state-500090 PAN: CESPG7167Q, AADHAR CARD NO.4316 4962 0972

Any persons, financial institutions having any sort of claim/ Rights/ interest/ charge on the below said property or any objections for the said sale of the property may file their objections in writing along with supporting documents, addressed to the undersigned within **7 days** from the date of Publication of this public Notice, failing which, it shall be construed that there are no claims of any sort over the below said properties our client shall be advised to proceed with the Proposed transaction any claims thereafter shall not be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of a Residential Flat No.S1, (BBMP Khata No. 868/544/448/S-1) in Second Floor, super built up area of 1756 sq.ft., Known as "IMPERIAL RESIDENCY APARTMENT" carved out in Sy.No. 3/2, situated at No. 444, 24th B Main, Agara, HSR Layout, Sector-1, Beguru Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru- 560 102 which comes under the BBMP jurisdiction, in all measuring about 1756 sq.ft and bounded as follows **East:** Flat S2. **West:** Apartment common Area, **North:** Apartment Common Area, **South:** Flat S4 and common area

Kamaraju, Advocate
No.1, Syndicate Bank Colony
Opp. Kamakshipalya Police Station
Magadi Main Road, Bangalore- 560 079
Mob: 9731210868, 9448628534
Email: manjupropert@gmail.com
Date: 25-04-2024

NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY ODISHA, CUTTACK
(Established by Odisha Act IV of 2008)
Kathajodi Campus, Sector 13, CDA, Cuttack -753015, Odisha

Recruitment for the Post of Researcher in the Centre for Child Rights at NLUO
Advt No.: NLUO/FR-001/24-04-2024

No. of Posts	Pay Level	Nature of Appointment
01	Academic Level 10 with Rationalized Entry Pay of Rs. 57,700/- along with D.A., H.R.A & other allowances as admissible to university employees.	5 Years Contract

The online application link, the payment link, instructions and other details are available on the career section of University website: **www.nluo.ac.in**

Note:
1. The last date for submission of online application form is **20.05.2024**.
2. Printout of the submitted online application form along with all other necessary documents such as educational and experience certificates, publications (if any) should be sent to the Registrar, National Law University Odisha by Speed/registered Post/Courier latest by **30.05.2024**.
3. The application fee of Rs. 1,000/- needs to be paid online using the payment gateway available along with the application form.
4. The University is at its discretion, may restrict the number of candidates to a reasonable limit on the basis of qualifications/experience higher than the minimum prescribed in the advertisement to be called for interview.
5. No TA/DA/Accommodation will be provided for attending the Interview.
6. For any updates regarding the recruitment process such as short listing, interview date, declaration of results etc., please visit University website regularly. No separate communication will be made to the candidates.

Sd/- Registrar

NMDC Ltd.
(A Govt. Of India Enterprise) (ISO 9001 Company)
Bailadila Iron Ore Mines, Bacheli Complex
Bacheli, Distt. – South Bastar (Dantewada), CG – 494553
Phone No.: 07857-230210, Mob.: 8085559082

//e-Tender Notice //

BIOM/BC/Contracts/Publication/2024-25/082/ **Date : 26.04.2024**

Bailadila Iron Ore Mines, Bacheli Complex, NMDC Ltd. invites e-bids for the following works. Intending tenderers may visit and download Tender Documents from CPP Portal or www.nmdc.co.in or http://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/. Any corrigendum/addedum to be issued, the bidder must visit the online protal from time to time to notice the same. Corrigendum/addedum will not be published in any newspaper.The offer has to be submitted online at the given MSTC portal only till 03:30 PM and will be opened on 04:00 PM on respective last dates.

MSTC Ref. No. NMDC/ Bacheli/ 24-25/ET/		NMDC Tender. No. BIOM/BC/ CONTRACTS /OTE(82)/24-25/	Short Description of Work	EMD (Rs.)	Last Date of Sub'n
1	5/14	C-366	Annual Repair and Maintenance of Public & Non- Residential buildings for the year 2024-25 at Bacheli Township	95,600/-	26-05-2024
2	6/15	C-264	Rehabilitation & Miscellaneous Civil works of Tailing Dam No. 01, BIOM Bacheli Complex	1,76,200/-	26-05-2024
3	7/16	C-359	Construction of protective measures (Buttress wall of 180 meter below WDY no. 04 and Check Bund at S-W nallah & below DSP platform) at Dep-05 for 2023-24, BIOM Bacheli Complex	46,400/-	26-05-2024
4	8/17	C-362	Modification of old mining rest shelter for toilet complex and misc. civil works at Dumper platform Deposit no. 05	32,200/-	27-05-2024
5	9/18	C-365	Development of open areas besides filter house at Mining area Dep-10&11A BIOM Bacheli	25,200/-	27-05-2024
6	10/19	C-347	Construction of water storage tank for initial sedimentation of water from source at Bacheli filter house Bacheli complex	1,44,700/-	27-05-2024
7	11/20	E-014	Electrification of Automated Sampling System & Robotic Laboratory at Bacheli Complex	27,100/-	28-05-2024
8	12/21	C-355	Deployment, operation and maintenance of truck mounted Road Sweeping Machine at BIOM Bacheli Complex for the year 2023-24	79,200/-	28-05-2024

HOD (M&S and Contracts)
BIOM, Bacheli Complex

IN THE LIMELIGHT

A still from *Shōgun*.

Power of translation: '*Shōgun*' champions the art of understanding

Shōgun is a refreshing reminder that sometimes you need to revive the literal Tokugawa Shōgunate to bridge the cumbersome gap between worlds; the series delicately balances the complexities of cross-cultural exchange, offering a rich exploration of socio-historical significance

Ayaan Paul Chowdhury

In its grand finale, FX's captivating rendition of James Clavell's historical epic gracefully bows out with a rendezvous with mortality.

"Please split your belly open by sunset," and "Have a good death" echo some of what we hear with the casualness of a tea sip. Yet, to truly grasp the weight of seppuku's socio-historical significance, honour the richness of its source material, and deftly navigate the intricacies of translation, the series stands alone in its unparalleled achievement. *Shōgun* employs a three-pronged replete with cross-cultural exchanges, verbal fencing, and the delicate dance of understanding in an era poised on the precipice of profound change.

Translation as illumination

The 1980s adaptation – starring the legendary Toshiro Mifune – opted for a bold approach, withholding subtitles from Japanese dialogue to immerse viewers in protagonist John Blackthorne's disorientation, that paid dividends in dramatic tension. Fast forward to 2024, and FX's iteration takes a different tack, embracing the power of translation to illuminate the inner workings of Japanese characters' minds. It's a choice that enriches Clavell's narrative, granting viewers access to the proverbial other side of the coin. At the heart of this lies a delicate balance between staying true to Clavell's original vision and distilling the dense historical context of feudal Japan without succumbing to the siren call of dull exposition. The show's creators, Justin Marks and Rachel Kondo undertook this Herculean task, ensuring that the essence of Clavell's 1,100-page opus remained intact while also infusing it with a contemporary sensibility.

Central to this reality-shaping alchemy is Anna Sawai's Lady Mariko, whose role as translator transcends mere linguistic mediation. As she offsets the cultural tete-a-tete, Mariko becomes a conduit for understanding, her words shaping the discourse between characters. In her hands, translation becomes a form of artistry, a delicate dance of diplomacy and deception that mirrors the intricacies of courtly intrigue. Where Blackthorne wants the "milk-dribbling ... smear" to know he's ready to go, Mariko casually converts to a prompt, "With utmost respect, the Anjin apologises for the misunderstanding" to hilarious effect; so much so, that this continuous back and forth between the two has quickly turned into an internet meme. Mariko's mastery of the spoken word mirrors linguistic theory's acknowledgment of translation as a nuanced art form, and the gravitas with which she employs the spoken word as the long-alluded 'Crimson Sky' herself, is a testament to how language can shape perceptions, and alter destinies and end entire wars far greater than the sword ever could.

A window to the unknown

But translation is not just about mastering vocabulary and syntax; it's about values, traditions, and the subtle nuances that define a culture. Behind the scenes, the creators embarked on a decade-long journey to bring Clavell's vision to life, painstakingly recreating the sights, sounds, and sensations of 17th-century Japan. From the meticulously crafted costumes to the scrupulous translation of dialogue, every detail is a brushstroke in their masterpiece and a testament to their unwavering commitment to storytelling excellence. For viewers, the result is a sumptuous feast for the senses, where every frame pulsates with the elegance of a bygone era.

Yet, beneath its polished veneer, *Shōgun* is more than mere visual splendour – it's a thoughtful meditation on the nature of understanding and clever use of visual storytelling.

With a playful shifting of Fuji's eyes, a painful wince across Buntaro's face or even Yabushige's cheeky grin; the series conveys a wealth of meaning that goes beyond the spoken word. It's not just about speaking the language; it's about becoming a part of it. The more time he spends in the "Japans" Blackthorne uncovers not just new words, but new ways of seeing the world. From the moment he washes ashore on the shores of Japan, the viewers are swept into an alien world where the language serves as the currency of understanding and belonging.

Against the backdrop of a society steeped in tradition and honour, Blackthorne's odyssey begins, guided by the currents of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Fans of Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival* would recall how the aforementioned linguistic school of thought shapes the manner in which reality is determined or perceived.

As he gradually grapples with the nuances of the Japanese way of life, from the elegant cadences of courtly etiquette to the terse commands of samurai honour, Blackthorne's journey becomes a testament to the transformative power of language in shaping perception and identity.

He soon finds himself gradually immersed in the rhythms of Japanese life.

Gone is the bumbling Englishman, extolling the virtues of Queen and country; in his place stands a man enmeshed in the fabric of Japanese society.

Blackthorne discovers that genuine comprehension transcends mere linguistic conversion. It demands a profound grasp of cultural context and a willingness to embrace the unknown.

Beyond comprehension

Shōgun kicks off with a clever Japanese aphorism, painting a layered picture of human nature: one heart for the world, another for intimates, and the elusive true self hidden away with only God as a confidant. The series expertly manoeuvres these layers from text to screen, offering a spectacular spectacle for all to behold, and from screen to dialogue, inviting insiders to decipher.

Yet, the labyrinthine corridors of Toranaga-sama's mind remain an indecipherable puzzle, evading even the sharpest of viewers, like a well-guarded fortress of intrigue.

In Hiroyuki Sanada's portrayal, Yoshi Toranaga becomes a figure beyond mere mortal comprehension, thanks to his knack for playing three-dimensional chess while others struggle with checkers. Toranaga's vision extends far beyond the mundane concerns of his peers, encompassing grand designs and long-term goals that only a select few can even hope to grasp. But most importantly, *Shōgun* presents Toranaga as a swift rebuttal to Hollywood's exoticised pastiche of feudal Japan.

His mystique lies in his ability to perceive connections and possibilities beyond the grasp of our ordinary (Anjin) minds. In the end, Toranaga's greatest strength was merely reading between the lines. Understanding, observing and knowing thy enemy.

Shōgun is a refreshing reminder that in a time where the power of the 'one-inch-tall barrier,' still seems distastefully under contention, sometimes you need to revive the literal Tokugawa Shōgunate to bridge the cumbersome gap between worlds.

Having finally come to a poignant yet rousing close, one must face the bittersweet reality that television may never witness such an adroit, poetic interplay of linguistics for a while. Only its words remain with us now, but what a bonfire it made.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

As student protests spread across U.S. college campuses, calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, a quiz on revolutionary student protests over the years

Joan Sony Cherian

QUESTION 1

During the Nazi regime in Germany, some students got together at the University of Munich to form an organisation to actively resist Hitler's government. Many of them later faced trials for their activism and were imprisoned and executed. Name the organisation.

QUESTION 2

In 1962, a series of student demonstrations were violently suppressed at Rangoon University. The military regime killed more than 100 students and arrested over 6,000. Why were the students protesting in the first place?

QUESTION 3

In 1973, students at the Athens Polytechnic started protests against the Greek military junta. The protests quickly escalated into a full-scale revolt. What was the rhyming chant that became popular in the movement?

QUESTION 4

As students were protesting against the Indonesian government in 1998, Indonesian soldiers opened fire on the protestors killing four. Outrage led to the then Indonesian President's resignation. Name the incident and the President.

QUESTION 5

In 2015, protests started in South African universities against the increase in student fees and the lack of government funding for universities. What was the movement called?

QUESTION 6

In 2014, students of Jadavpur University, Kolkata started protests against an incident wherein a female student was molested on campus. The movement threw light on sexual violence on campus and continued for four months. What was the movement called?

Visual Question

This was a rally by college students in Madras in January, 1965. What was their protest about?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This telescope was launched into operation on this day in 1990. **Ans: Hubble Space Telescope**

2. This actor went on to receive the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in *Scent of a Woman*. **Ans: Al Pacino**

3. Chloé Zhao was recognised for her work for which film? **Ans: Nomadland**

4. This American professional basketball player died on this day in 2019. **Ans: John Havlicek**

5. This Italian inventor was born in 1874 on this day. Name him and his invention. **Ans: Guglielmo Marconi, Radio**

6. This is an international observance recognises global efforts to control this disease. **Ans: World Malaria Day**

Visual: Identify this politician who served as the President of her country. **Ans: Violeta Chamorro, was the first and, to date, only woman to hold the position of president of Nicaragua**

Early Birds: KN Viswanathan | Rajmohan V | Varghese joseph | Jyot Prakash Gulati

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

In-laws; boarding and lodging (Murali Narayanan, Pilani)

The plural of a brother-in-law is brothers-in-law. Sisters-in-law, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law. But we say 'in-laws' and not 'ins-law!' 'In-laws' are one's relatives by marriage, especially father-in-law and mother-in-law. The hotel sign 'boarding and lodging' is common in India. In British English, it is 'board and lodging.' But you say 'boarding house,' 'boarding school.' A boarding house is a 'private lodging house, not a hotel, that supplies meals.' A boarding school is one where children not only learn but live and are provided board and lodging. The room where the directors of a company hold meetings is a board room.

Perjury (Ujagar Singh, Chandigarh)

'Perjury' is a lie told on purpose, especially in a court of law.

He committed perjury.

When it is used as a verb, it is followed by the reflexive pronoun.

He perjured himself to protect her.

The judge was convinced that she had perjured herself.

'Perjury' is a legal term. A perjurer is a person who commits perjury.

Nadir (T. S. Lyndoh, Shillong)

It means 'the lowest point in one's fortunes; a time of deep despair.'

Losing my job at the age of 30 was the nadir of my life.

'Nadir' is from the Arabic 'nadir assamt,' which means 'opposite to the zenith.' Literally, it means 'the part of the celestial sphere which is directly under the observer.' From this, we get the meaning 'lowest point.' We get 'zenith' from the Arabic 'samt,' 'over the head.' Figuratively 'zenith' means 'the peak,' 'the highest point in one's life.' He is at the zenith of his career. The 'a' in 'nadir' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'take' or in 'bat,' and 'dir' like 'dear.' The stress is on the first syllable.

Veto (B. Ramanatha Rao, Bangalore)

'Veto' is Latin for 'I forbid.' It is 'the constitutional right to reject a legislative enactment,' 'the right of a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council to reject a resolution.' The Soviet Union used the veto to reject the resolution. It is also used as a verb.

The President vetoed the Bill.

The V is pronounced like 'ee' in 'feel' and 'to' like 'toe.' The stress is on the first syllable.

Benefactor, beneficiary (Pritam Singh, Bombay)

A benefactor is one who helps another with money or materials. He may help an individual or institution. A beneficiary is one who receives 'a benefit or advantage, especially of money or property.' In law, a 'beneficiary' is one who 'is left a legacy under someone's will.' A legacy is 'money or property left to someone in a will.'

Published in The Hindu on October 15, 1991

Word of the day

Suave:
smoothly agreeable and courteous with a degree of sophistication

Synonyms: charming, refined, civilised

Usage: *He is very pleasant and suave.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/suavepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /swa:v/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Bus stands and roads leading out of city full as many travel to their home towns to vote today

Private bus operators reported that they had seen at least a 25%–30% increase in travellers for this election when compared with the Assembly polls

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On the eve of polling for the Lok Sabha elections, bus stands in Bengaluru were filled with people wanting to go to their home towns to cast their vote in the districts which go to the polls on Friday. While the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) operated buses on demand, private operators deployed hundreds of extra buses, especially to Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts.

"We have reservation only for buses that go to Mangaluru. As the election is happening in two phases, we have not particularly deployed extra buses. The demand is only for places in South Karnataka, excluding Shivamogga and Davangere. Hence, buses will be running as per demand," said a senior official from the KSRTC. Some BMTC buses have also been deployed for the movement of election officials.

Heading home: A large number of people waiting at the KSRTC Satellite Bus Stand on Mysuru Road to travel towards Mysuru, Malavalli, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Private bus operators reported that they had seen at least a 25% to 30% increase in travellers for this election when compared with the Assembly elections. "We have seen a lot of reservations for Udupi, Mangaluru, and Madikeri for this election weekend. In fact, we have deployed 300 extra buses to Udupi and Mangaluru," said Nataraj Sharma, president of the Federation of Karnataka State Private Transport Association.

However, despite the availability of buses, commuters were unhappy with the slight rise in the ticket fares in private buses. The fares were north of ₹3,000 for AC buses to Mangaluru and Udupi on many private websites as of Thursday morning. Even for short distances, the price was higher by 15-20%.

"Private bus timings are more convenient, and we thought it would be emptier than government buses. But the fare was over ₹1,000 to go from Bengaluru to Chitradurga, which is at least ₹200 more than usual. That is why we changed our plans and decided to take the government bus," said Mahalakshmi G.R., a domestic worker from Yelahanka.

Mr. Sharma denied the fare hike and said that only standard rates were being followed for all daytime routes while the fare was slightly on the costlier side for night buses.

Traffic volume

According to Bengaluru traffic police officials, the movement of people from Bengaluru to other places to cast vote began earlier this week. "A lot of people have already gone (to cast votes) and there was only 40%-50% of the usual crowd on Bengaluru roads on Thursday. However, by night there will be some traffic congestion on outgoing roads as there will be more vehicles on the road," said M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru.

The police had identified Tumakuru Road, Mysuru Road, Outer Ring Road, K.R. Puram, and Electronics City as the roads which will see more traffic volume on Thursday night. "We are in coordination with the KSRTC to ensure that traffic moves out in a gated manner, and we have also deployed additional staff for these routes," Mr. Anucheth added.

EC sets up voter facilitation counters in locations that have multiple booths

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To ensure people do not face any hassle in locating their polling booths in locations where more than three booths are clustered, the Election Commission has set up voter facilitation counters to assist people. This is one of the strategies adopted by the EC to deal with urban apathy and to increase voter turnout.

The voter facilitation counters will be like a help desk for people to locate their booth in the cluster.

In entire Karnataka, 3,415 locations have multiple polling booths.

Of the 14 constituencies where polling will be held on Friday, as many as 2,089 locations have more than three polling booths.

Kurma Rao M., Additional Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), said some locations, such as schools and colleges, have multiple polling booths. "People tend to go away after seeing huge queues at the booths. Booth-level officers (BLOs) will be deployed at the voter facilitation counters to guide voters to their booth, and ensure that they do not go away without voting," he said.

> In polling booths where a big crowd gathers, we will issue tokens for a hassle-free voting experience.
>
> **MANOJ KUMAR MEENA,** Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka

Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, who admitted that urban apathy is a huge challenge, said all measures are being taken to ensure people do not make any excuse to not go to the polling station. "In polling booths where a big crowd gathers, we will issue tokens for a hassle-free voting experience," he said.

QR code

To help voters navigate their way to the polling station, the Election Commission has distributed voters' slips with QR codes in urban constituencies. Voters can scan the QR code to find their way to the polling station. This innovative initiative was used for the first time during the recent polls for the teachers' constituency in Bengaluru. With this initiative, the polling percentage in Bengaluru teachers' constituency election went up from 66% in 2020 to 86% in 2024, Mr. Meena said.

43 Assembly segments

Stating that the QR code initiative will be made available in 43 urban Assembly constituencies, including in Bengaluru, Mr. Meena said, "It is difficult to locate a polling station in urban areas, unlike in rural areas. People stay away from voting even if there is a slight disturbance. With the QR code, they can scan and navigate to the polling station easily."

Pointing out that urban areas usually record a lower turnout, Mr. Meena said, "We have identified around 5,000 polling stations where turnout was low in previous elections. We are targeting booths that reported less than 30% voter turnout in previous elections. In BBMP limits alone, we have identified 3,000 such polling stations. We are trying to provide better facilities to improve voting percentage," he said.

Chunavana app

Assessing the needs of the public through surveys, the Election Commission has come out with the Chunavana mobile application. A Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey commissioned by the CEO's office had revealed that 25% of people, who did not vote, stayed away because they were not aware of their polling stations, 17.5% of urban voters did not vote because of long queues at polling stations, and 7.5% of urban voters did not vote because they were unaware of their candidates.

Through the Chunavana app, voters can find out the number of people in the queue at each booth and the availability of parking slots on a real-time basis.

"The app will offer users polling booth location, navigation to the polling booth, candidate information, polling officers' details, the queue at the polling station on a real-time basis, available parking space and nearby emergency facilities," Mr. Meena added.

EDUCATION HUB
A Business Initiative

Alliance ONE 2.0 - Promoting Sustainable Development

Alliance University recently concluded its highly anticipated inter-university fest, Alliance ONE 2.0, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to promoting sustainable development. The event, witnessed enthusiastic participation from esteemed institutions such as RV University, Jain University - Faculty of Engineering, Center for Management Studies, CMS Business School, SSMRV, and National School of Business, alongside teams from Alliance University itself. The fest kicked off with the inaugural ceremony, featuring a presidential address by Mr. Abhay G. Chebbi, Pro-Chancellor of Alliance University. He welcomed all the jury members and participants, emphasizing the importance of awareness about sustainable development goals.

Sir M. Visvesvaraya Institute Of Technology - Graduation Day Cum farewell -2024

The Graduation Day Cum farewell -2024 was held at SMVIT, Bengaluru. Hon. Justice N. S. Sanjay Gowda, High Court of Karnataka Bengaluru was the Chief Guest and Dr. Sudhir Kamath, Director, Defence Industry Academia Raman Centre of Excellence, IISc, Bengaluru was the Guest of Honor. The event was presided by Dr A C Chandrashekar Raju, President, Sri Krishnadevaraya Educational Trust. Sri K V Sekhar Raju, VP, Sri Krishnadevaraya Educational Trust and Sri K. Syama Raju, Hon.Secretary, Sri KET, graced the occasion. The Hon. Trustees of Sri Krishnadevaraya Educational Trust, the Principal, Staff, Students and Parents graced the occasion. The programme began with the customary Lighting of the lamp and the oath was put forth by the Principal, Prof Rakesh S. G for the students. The Hon. Justice N. S. Sanjay Gowda, High Court of Karnataka, in his short speech, advised students to have a fixed vision, and believe in oneself. Dr. Sudhir Kamath, Guest of honour mentioned that India is being recognised today, and the IT revolution is at Bangalore. He also conveyed to students to pursue their passion. Finally, he told students to be proud of their nationality and be proud of being Indian. The Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour was felicitated by the Hon. Trustees. As part of the programme, students of the Institute were recognised for their academic Excellence and also Extracurricular activities. Sri K. Syama Raju, Hon. Secretary, Sri KET thanked and congratulated the students. Dr. A.C. Chandrashekar Raju, President, Sri KET delivered the Presidential address.

Electoral Awareness Programme at Kristu Jayanti College Engages Citizens Ahead of Upcoming Elections

In anticipation of the upcoming elections, Electoral Literacy Club of KJC organised Electoral awareness programme to create awareness and to empower youngsters about their role in the democratic process. The chief guest of the programme was Gangappa. M, Special Returning Officer, BBMP, Bengaluru. He emphasized the moral and constitutional implications of voting. Principal, KJC while addressing the students highlighted that the electoral awareness programme underscores the vital role educational institutions play in fostering civic responsibility and democratic values among the youth. By empowering students with knowledge and encouraging active participation in the electoral process, these students are not only contributing to a more informed electorate but also laying the groundwork for a more vibrant and inclusive democracy.

Kristu Jayanti College Autonomous Marks Milestone with 25th College Annual Day Celebration "Samyagdarshan"

The special occasion celebrated by Kristu Jayanti College Autonomous, Bengaluru its 25th College Annual Day "Samyagdarshan" was honored by the presence of esteemed Chief Guest Prof. Ahalya Sharma, VC, Karnataka Sanskrit University, Bengaluru. The program began with an inspiring inaugural video, followed by a heartwarming performance from the college choir. During the welcome address, Prof. Dr. Calistus Jude, Dean, Faculty of Sciences, appreciated Prof. Ahalya Sharma as a dynamic and accomplished leader. The dais was adorned by distinguished personalities including the Chief Guest Dr. Ahalya Sharma, Dr. Suba G A Manuel, the Parent Representative and Head Department of Life Sciences, Mount Carmel College; Fr. Dr. Augustine George, Principal, KJC Autonomous, Fr. Dr. Lijo P Thomas, VP; Fr. Emmanuel P. J, Director, KJC of Law, Dr. Gopakumar AV, Dean, Faculty of Humanities; Prof. Dr. Calistus Jude, Dean, Faculty of Sciences and Dr. Aloysius Edward, Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Management. On the occasion, Fr Dr Augustine George, Principal, presented the annual academic report titled "Trans Disciplinary Capabilities for Transformative Education," showcasing the college's outstanding accomplishments for the year 2023-24. The 25th College Annual Day at KJC showcased academic excellence, tradition, and a commitment to holistic education with a vibrant display of cultural performances by students.

Nrityanjali-2024: Celebrating Dance and Culture at Kristu Jayanti College Autonomous

In celebration of dance and culture, Literary and Cultural Association of KJC, Autonomous organized the prestigious Nrityanjali - National Intercollegiate Dance Fest on April 20, 2024. For the 17th edition of national intercollegiate dance fest, Professor T G Sitharam, Chairman, All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Ministry of Education, GOI, New Delhi, was the chief guest and renowned Bharatanatyam exponent, Vid. Praveen Kumar P. of Chithkala School of Dance, Bengaluru, was the Guest of Honour, respectively. Fr. Dr. Augustine George, Principal, warmly welcomed all dignitaries and the attendees, he spoke about the remarkable achievement of the college. he inaugural ceremony also marked the launch of the first edition of "Culdeioscope", by Literary and Cultural Association for the college. The magazine was released by the esteemed Chief Guest Prof TG Sitharam. The winners of 17th edition of National Intercollegiate Dance Fest- Nrityanjali 2024 were St Joseph's University and the runners up were Dayananda Sagar University respectively.

THE HINDU GROUP

The season of obvious reminders and instructions ends today.

Yes, we, the young voters of India, will be voting. See you at the polls.

THE HINDU

Get yourself inked, click a selfie and send it to
89392 83283
to get featured in *The Hindu.*

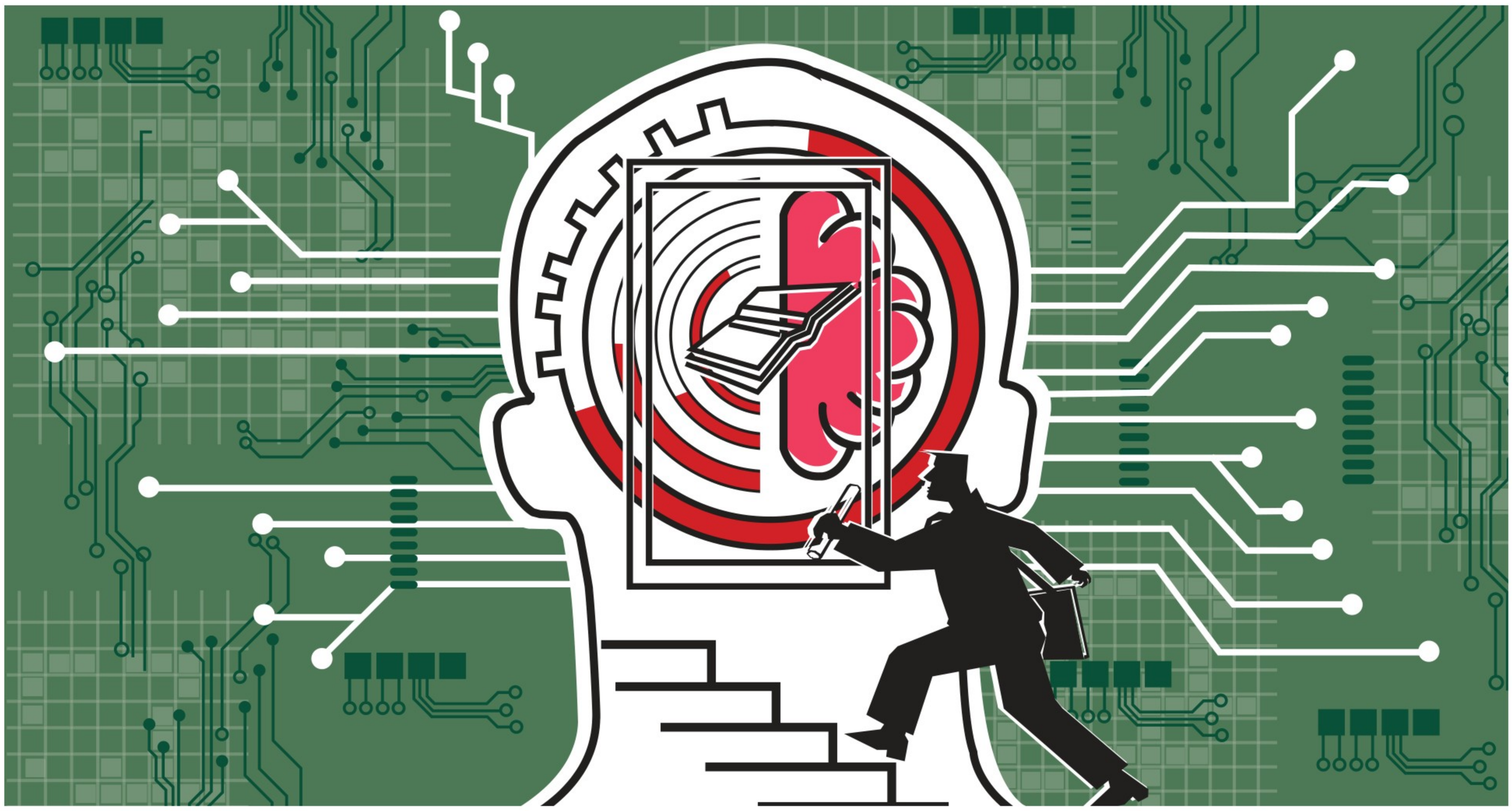


Illustration: Sebastian Francis

Classroom to cubicle: Filling the digital skill gap

With a growing demand for digital talent in India, non-profits and corporates are running programmes for graduates and unemployed youth to provide them with relevant skills in information technology, like cloud computing and cybersecurity. **Liffy Thomas** looks at a few success stories and the challenges of scaling these programmes and keeping pace with the evolving needs of the job market

In a residential patch at Puttanna Road in Basavanagudi, a building rumbles with excitement. On the second floor, a class is in session, and students lap up every bit of it. Lessons are wrapped in fun activities. The other classroom on the same floor is relatively subdued: they are now on to a recap of the day's lessons, primarily around "AWS Shield". Another striking feature of these twin classrooms is that the educator is as young as the students.

This is one of the 18 Livelihood Centres operated by Magic Bus India Foundation in Bengaluru. The non-profit, which operates in the skilling space, has 114 centres across India. These centres offer digital courses to unemployed graduates from marginalised communities based on the cloud curriculum of AWS re/Start – graduates in BE Computer Science, Information Science, Electronics and Communication, B.Sc. Computer Science and BCA make up each cohort with a three-month run.

Magic Bus India Foundation "pitches tent" in an area after assessing the employability scenario among the underprivileged youth there. First-generation learners are imparted employability skills. At Jayanagar 1st Block, Capgemini's Digital Academy, run in association with Edubridge Learning, delivers a host of new-age tech courses to enable young people to navigate the world of work. Undergraduates with a degree in any computer application program are the target. Based on their skill levels, they are guided into a course. SQL, Cloud, Cyber Security, DevOps or Machine Learning are among the courses on offer.

Apart from those looking for their first job, there are students looking for an upskilling opportunity.

V. Shweetha juggles a night shift job and, during the day, attends classes at the Digital Academy. Her batchmate, P. Sharley, wants to move from software testing to development. "A majority of the new-age programmes offered outside charge us more than ₹40,000, and credibility is a big question," says Sharley.

> Employers are hungry for new skills, and colleges can do a lot to make sure their faculty development programmes are up to date with industry requirements.
>
> **KIRTI SETH**
> CEO of Sector Skill Council
> NASSCOM

A digital skill training programme for diploma students at R.V. College of Engineering in Bengaluru. (Left) Students from Capgemini Digital Academy during the graduation ceremony.

Partnerships with companies

Over the last couple of years, several corporates have partnered with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to facilitate employment opportunities for youth in digital skills.

Recently, Microsoft announced a major skilling initiative aimed at equipping two million people with AI skills by 2025. The "ADVANTA(I)GE INDIA" initiative, a part of Microsoft's Skills for Jobs programme, will focus on training individuals in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. As per a communication, Microsoft will partner with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and ten state governments to provide basic and advanced AI training to 5,000 students and job seekers in 100 rural vocational education institutions and training centres. Amazon Web Services (AWS) India is already running 'AI Ready' to provide free AI skills training to two million people by 2025.

Samsung R&D Institute Bangalore (SRI-B) opened its "Innovation Campus" programme at the KLE Institute of Technology in Hubballi to upskill youth in Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Science.

Through Infosys Springboard, the company plans to empower over 10 million learners, including people between the ages of 10 and 22, with digital and life skills by 2025.

Cognizant, IBM, Wipro, and a clutch of other corporates constitute a digital-skilling ecosystem that seeks to make young graduates job-ready.

With the 2024 Interim Budget talking about getting youth ready with skills for the future, especially in AI and robotics, many more partnerships with national and state agencies are expected.

Are these tie-ups translating into employment? Is it helping bridge the huge skill gap? These are major talking points in every industry. Despite the many digital courses offered by organisations to help young graduates enter the corporate world, considerable ground still remains to be covered.

Need of the hour

Through Capgemini's digital academies, which are present in more than 13 locations in India and run with the support of six training partners, more than 75,000 aspiring job seekers have been trained since they started in 2015.

"This is a small fraction, and we need to do more," says Anurag Pratap, Vice President and Head of CSR - India - Capgemini. He says more than 80% got the job in a larger ecosystem with a small fraction also joining Capgemini. "The intent of these specialised training programmes in IT capabilities is to prepare them for a larger ecosystem and not to hire them into Capgemini," says Pratap.

Arun Nalavadi, Executive Director, Sustainability and Livelihoods, Magic Bus India Foundation, says all the programmes the non-profit is running with the support of various corporates are not just for skilling but also to ensure the beneficiary takes up jobs. "Skilling and placement go hand-in-hand. And our placement ratio ranges between 70% to 80%, but not necessarily for digital initiatives because of the cyclic nature of the IT industry," says Nalavadi.

Extending the reach

With diverse sectors looking for new-age digital skills, definitions of talent are being revisited.

Last year, the Sector Skill Council at the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) launched 'Talent Connect' to help companies find digitally skilled and certified industry-ready talent. Today, the platform has more than three lakh people and 50,000 job postings. Most of the candidates were from tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

Kirti Seth, CEO of Sector Skill Council, NASSCOM, says non-IT companies are also coming on board, as every industry has a tech aspect. The sweet spot, she says, is that the majority of the companies looking for talent are the smaller ones.

"Bigger companies have huge recruitment engines, so this becomes a good aggregator for those who do not have the bandwidth," she says.

To maximize impact, it is imperative that skilling programmes are closely aligned with industry needs. Talent Connect, for instance, has been unlike a regular job portal. "We created a gamification tool that would create an aspiration and motivation linked to the skills. If candidates did nothing and were enlisted on the job portal, they wouldn't get weightage. Those who have completed a course are visible. And, those with certification get the most visibility among employers," says Seth.

Actions at multiple levels

To overcome India's digital skilling challenges, a multi-pronged approach is required, covering various stakeholders, policies, and initiatives. The curriculum must be aligned with the industry's requirements at multiple levels, including school and vocational education. With the National Education Policy and the National Credit Framework, educational institutions have different avenues to seek support to strengthen training. "Employers are hungry for new skills, and colleges can do a lot to make sure their faculty development programmes are up to date with industry requirements. Those institutions who have all the capability but just need skilling can use the job standards created by the Sector Skill Council to train their faculty," says Seth of NASSCOM.

She says one suggestion they have for corporates and colleges is to make sure whatever programme they are running is aligned with the National Skills Qualification Framework. Accredited programmes stand to get more benefits.

"If one does courses that are embedded and learner can get credit, then the completion rates will shoot up. Courses can be used for credit equivalence in college, and this is a huge benefit for students as well," she says.

Seth says Karnataka was the first to initiate various skill initiatives, but the adoption was not as expected. "What we are discussing with them is how we can drive adoption. We need to come up with a joint strategy so that the programmes can be adopted across stages," she says.

Extending a campus initiative

R.V. College of Engineering has been investing in internships and micro-credentials to bridge the learning gap among students across branches to meet industry needs. Through the "Women in Cloud Centre of Excellence" set up on the campus, more than 250 students have been trained and certified in the last two years for the internship activity. Supported by RSST Trust, the programme carves a niche in cloud-native applications. The centre also focuses on digital skilling for under privileged PUC students and degree colleges.

"Around 42 Diploma Government college students are trained free of cost," says Mamatha G.S., Professor and Associate Dean PG Studies, Department of Information Science and Engineering, RV College of Engineering.

She says internship or micro-credentials activities increase the learning curve of students. "As they are short-term with proof of specific learning outcomes validated through a reliable assessment process, we have been encouraging engineering students across branches and years to go for it," says Mamatha.

The road ahead

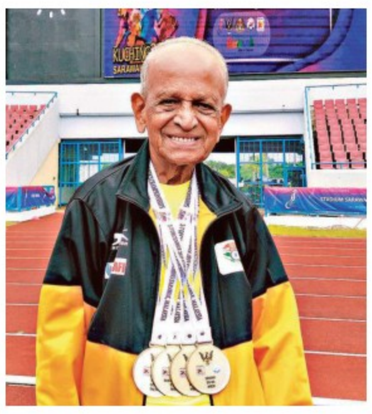
Many of these programmes, when offered at highly subsidised rates or for free, have seen attrition. "We have a 5 to 7% attrition rate in the first ten days of the course," says Pratap of Capgemini.

But we need more upskilling programmes to cater to an inclusive segment waiting to enter the workforce. We need companies coming forward to invest in infrastructure and initiatives that improve digital inclusion.

Nalavadi says many engineering colleges with a not-so-strong placement record give them space where they run industry-relevant programmes. When more donor partners come forward, such digital drives can reach more colleges in tier 2 and 3 cities.

"Support need not be only in terms of funds; it could also come by way of building capacity and giving us technical inputs," adds Nalavadi. He cites the example of Accenture and Mphasis Limited currently supporting Magic Bus India Foundation by sharing insights on what modules to include and skills needed in the coming years. "AWS gives us global insights," says Nalavadi.

He adds, "Placement is just a pathway, but the real social return on investment is to see these young people embed themselves in the workplace."



Get, set, go (clockwise from left) NS Dattatreya, Asmita Handa, and a participant from a previous edition of TCS World 10K. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

TCS World 10K Bengaluru returns with a fresh start. A new venue, scenic route and a post-race party await runners

Sole mates unite

Praveen Sudevan
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There is a primal urge etched into our very DNA, a whisper from our evolutionary past. It is the urge to run. Perhaps it is the memory of chasing prey across the savannah, the desperate sprint from a lurking predator, or the exhilarating freedom of movement. Whatever the reason, running has become ingrained in the human experience.

But beyond the echoes of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, why do we lace up our shoes today? The reasons are as diverse as the runners themselves. Some seek the physical challenge, for others, it is a meditative journey. The rhythmic pounding of feet on pavement can be a form of self-expression, a release from the daily grind.

Running transcends age, ability, and background. Evidence: NS Dattatreya, 96, who is gearing up for the TCS World 10K in Bengaluru this Sunday, with 30,000-plus participants across on-ground and virtual categories.

Dattatreya is not your typical nonagenarian. He is an inspiration to runners across India, a defiant force who has conquered over 100 marathons and walkathons. His fitness journey, which began after retiring from the State Bank of Mysore in 1989, has seen him transform from an occasional participant in sporting events to a champion.

Although he participates in whichever long-distance races he can, the TCS World 10K is special to him for two reasons. One is that it is happening in his hometown.

The second reason is bittersweet. "I lost my second son to cancer. I know TCS supports cancer research through its marathon events. I hope that the funds raised by TCS might one day lead to a breakthrough."

'New home, new route'

Partnering with the Indian Army, the 2024 TCS World 10K Bengaluru finds a new home at the iconic Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground. Pre-race activities will kick off at the Rajendra Sinhji Army Officers Institute (RSAOI), culminating in a race through the heart of Bengaluru. Runners will go past Ulsoor Lake for a scenic three-kilometre stretch before tackling a strategically designed course with minimal U-turns for the Open 10K. This new route, crafted in collaboration with Bengaluru Police, showcases the city's spirit - 'Endendigu Bengaluru' (Boundless Bengaluru). Participants will run past Chinnaswamy Stadium, the High Court, and the majestic Vidhana Soudha.

"This year's event is about new experiences," says Vivek Singh, co-founder of Procam International, which runs the event. "We wanted to avoid simply cramming more people into Kanteerava Stadium (the previous venue of the event), even though it would have been easier for us. It's a new home and route and very exciting."

"This year, for the first time ever, we'll have a post-race party in the park featuring artists from Saregama," he adds, "Plus, we have the legendary (shotputter from New Zealand) Valerie Adams joining us! A four-time world champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist, she's an incredible role model and a true advocate for women in sports. It's going to be an amazing event."

With a total prize of $210,000, the event has attracted some of the leading Indian and international athletes and amateur runners from across the globe. Winners in the Indian Men's and Women's categories will be awarded ₹2,75,000 each. Furthermore, a record-breaking performance could see them take home an additional ₹2,00,000.

The elite Indian women's field heats up with defending champion Tamshi Singh, aiming for back-to-back titles. Harmanjot Singh, last year's runner-up, will return to challenge in the Indian men's category.

Running for others

For commercial pilot Asmita Handa, running is ingrained in her daily routine. It is an activity she has loved since school.

Layovers disrupt her schedule, but eight hours of rest are sacrosanct. She pounds the pavement – morning or night. A local track always awaits her laced-up shoes. "After long stretches in the cockpit, a pilot needs to loosen up, and running does the trick," she says.

Childbirth in 2010 forced a hiatus from running, and pregnancy's hormonal shifts demanded a cautious return. Discipline and consistency, Asmita's guiding principles, saw her start slow – five to 10-kilometre runs. Once a sprinter, a newfound love for longer distances emerged, building endurance. It became a balancing act: cherishing motherhood while reclaiming fitness.

Asmita has now become a pacer, an experienced runner who guides others in a race by maintaining a set pace.

"Pacing is a lot like being a flight captain - you're responsible for everyone on board. You don't just fly solo; you take your passengers, crew, and ground staff with you. It's about everyone working together, and encouraging each other to the finish line."

For more information about the event, visit tcsworld10k.procam.in

Tracing Bengaluru's cultural heritage

The International Music & Arts Society's 40th year commemorative volume shows how it became a trusted chronicler of art

From the archives Canadian pianist Paul Stewart performing for IMAS 35th anniversary at the Durbar Hall in Bangalore palace in 2010 (left), a young Rani Vijaya Devi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Malini White

The decision of the International Music & Arts Society to bring out a commemorative volume to celebrate its 40th year resulted in a gorgeous book, an invaluable record of Bengaluru's cultural activity.

The idea of starting a cultural society was suggested in 1974 by the erstwhile Maharaja of Mysore Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar to his sister Rani Vijaya Devi of Kotda Sangani, who had settled in Bengaluru.

A fortuitous naissance indeed, as the Mysore royal family was known for its rich cultural heritage. An exceptional polymath, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar was a noted scholar of Sanskrit, a connoisseur and practitioner of both Carnatic and Western classical music. Mysore's patronage also extended to visual arts.

The family wanted to share this significant legacy with people, thereby continuing from court to courtyard, a tradition of royal patronage that enabled artistes to thrive and share their talents with the public, though IMAS has been careful in maintaining its high aesthetic standards while participating in a healthy democratisation of the arts. The volume is, incidentally, also a record of how patronage of the arts has shifted from royalty to corporates.

Chaired by Vijaya Devi, an IMAS committee was formed with a dedicated band of friends, who shared her views on promoting music and the arts. Accompanying her diplomat-husband, Thakur Sahib of Kotda Sangani, she had developed a network of Indian as well as international friends and experts in culture.

The opening essay is appropriately by Vijaya Devi on growing up in Mysore, those early years when the various strands of culture were woven indelibly into her life.

Thereafter, the book is divided into convenient sections, dealing with the society's history and some of its major programmes in music, dance and the visual arts.

The Essay section alone would make this book worth acquiring, with Malavika Sarukkai's 'Tradition and Change in Bharatanatyam'; George Mitchell, famous for his explorations of Hampi, has contributed 'From Vijayanagar to Mysore: Palace Architecture of Southern India', and Prateeti Ballal's observations on Chamber Music, among others.

Such a review cannot do justice to the volume's riches. Only the readers' personal perusal of it can do so.

Trip down to the sea coast

Set in a converted old bungalow, Bastian Garden City draws inspiration from global holiday destinations, and the city-centric menu features fish from Mangaluru

Priyamedha Dutta
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Imagine yourself holidaying in Greece, wandering through the small towns of Italy or spending a night under the Kenyan sky.

Located on St. Mark's Road, Bastian Garden City might be your answer to those much-anticipated trips. Designed by interior designer Minal Chopra, the restaurant is set in a converted 60-year-old bungalow covered by lush greenery. Co-founded by actor Shilpa Shetty, the Bengaluru outlet has a more relaxed setting in contrast to their Mumbai outpost, which constantly buzzes with the city's it crowd.

The décor draws inspiration from holiday destinations around the world, and the boho-chic vibe is complemented with cool-tone interiors in shades of beige, white and taupe. The hues of a neutral palette intertwine with statement design elements such as the sprawling open bar, lazily undulating vertical ceiling fans, and modern chandeliers that cast a warm glow.

The space is spread across 22,000 square feet with two levels, one that opens up into an alfresco dining area, a nice addition for breezy evenings.

"Converting the first floor of the bungalow was a labour of love. Harnessing natural light became a priority, prompting us to embrace glass ceilings and open up the space from all sides. This transformation not only invited the outdoors in but also allowed us to showcase the beauty of the surrounding trees," says Ranjit Bindra, managing director and founder of Bastian Garden City.

Decadent shoreline Bastian Garden City is a venue for celebration. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Like Mumbai, Bastian in Bengaluru features a seafood-forward menu. "A large part of the menu is the same as Bombay, but we have also tried to incorporate some local seasonal ingredients that we get here, as a lot of our seafood comes from Mangaluru," says executive Chef Daniel Hernandez Punzo.

We try the pan-fried salmon, topped with creamed spinach and a parmesan puff. The salty salmon exudes freshness, and complements the creamy spinach. We also order the crab roll, which consists of crab meat combined with fresh, aromatic herbs including basil, and coriander with house-made *ponzu* drizzled on top, along with rich truffle oil.

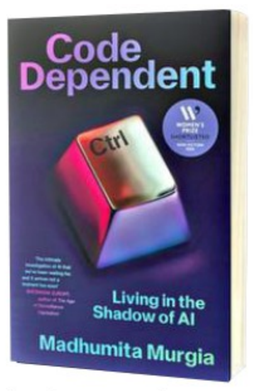
The meat dishes are thoughtfully curated like their tenderloin tiradito combined with chipotle ponzu and pico de gallo relish. We also try the pork belly, on Daniel's recommendation. You know meat is well-done when it is juicy at its first bite. The pork is pan seared in gochujang glaze, with pickled onion, topped with crispy garlic and sesame.

The meal ends with mango tres leches cake, a favourite of Chef Dhiraj Jankar from the pastry department. If you prefer something more Instagrammable – after all, social media has become an essential part of the Bastian experience – try the feuilletine 'pull me up' cake. It tastes as good as it looks, with dense chocolate cake layered with chocolate sauce, then topped with chocolate shavings.

Bastian Garden City is at 4, St Mark's Rd, Shanthala Nagar. Price for two: ₹12,000 including alcohol

STEPOUT

Let's talk AI



Madhumita Murgia's debut book *Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI*, has been shortlisted for the 2024 Women's Prize for Non-fiction. She will interact with Vidushi Marda, a lawyer and researcher, and together they will explore the impact of technology on individuals and communities. *On May 4, 6.30pm ay Bangalore International Centre, Domlur.*

Love in Tokyo

Lucky Chan has unveiled its third Bengaluru outlet. Besides dim sums and sushi there will also be green mango salad, garlic noodle soup, cream cheese dumplings, pea rice Thai yellow curry, bubble tea and more.

The place is designed with neon accents reminiscent of downtown Tokyo with layered colours, patterns, and textures such as brick on edge.

Lucky Chan is on the Third Floor, Forum South.

Cooperative bank depositors meet Priyanka

The depositors of Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Niyamita, a cooperative bank, met Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary on Tuesday. The delegation led by Bengaluru South Congress candidate Sowmya Reddy asked Ms. Vadra to facilitate the setting up of a Special Investigation Team to probe an alleged scam in the bank.

The depositors told Ms. Vadra that although the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was entrusted to carry out the investigation six months back, the CBI is yet to appoint an investigation officer. They alleged that influential elected representatives stopped the CBI from making the appointment. Depositors of Guru Sarvabhauma Souharda Credit Co-operative Society and Sri Vasista Credit Souharda Sahakari Limited were also present. The depositors of these banks were also duped.

A delegation of bank depositors with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday.

Specially challenged electors

Of the total electorate of 2.88 crore in the 14 constituencies that go to polls on Friday, 2,76,042 are specially challenged electors (Persons with Disabilities - PwDs).

Working towards easing the voter identification and registration process for PwDs, the Election Commission has offered these electors customised services that they can ask for through a specially designed mobile application called Saksham.

The Saksham app provides a number of features to help PwDs register to vote, find their polling station, and cast their vote. So far in the 14 constituencies, 756 PwDs have requested wheelchairs, 489 for transportation and 31 for assistance. These specially challenged voters have time till 5 p.m. on the polling day to book their requests.

> Congress stands for what it has said in its manifesto. Anything outside of it is not our agenda.
>
> **D.K. SHIVAKUMAR**
> KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister

Modi in State on April 28, 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit the State again on April 28 and 29. On April 28, Mr. Modi will begin with a public address in Belagavi, followed by rallies in Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district, Davangere, and Ballari. Mr. Modi is slated to address a meeting in Bagalkot on April 29.

> This Lok Sabha election is not like any other election. It is an election to make India win.
>
> **B.Y. VIJAYENDRA**
> BJP State president and Shikaripur MLA

Pourakarmikas carrying EVMs and VVPAT for distribution to officials on election duty in Bengaluru on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Heatwave conditions to prevail in six segments

There will be heatwave conditions in six of the 14 constituencies in Karnataka, which are going to polls on Friday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a special weather forecast and warning bulletin for Parliament constituencies of national election-phase 2, valid from April 24 to 28, 2024.

According to the weather warning, there will be heat wave conditions in Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Mandya, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, and Kolar constituencies on the polling day.

A. Prasad, scientist, IMD, Bengaluru, said that in the next two to three days starting April 25 there would be heatwave conditions in several districts of the State, including those which are going for polls on April 26.

37 degrees in Bengaluru

"There will be a departure by four to five degrees Celsius in some districts. In Bengaluru, the maximum temperature will be around 37 degrees Celsius," Mr. Prasad said. He added voters can take precautions by wearing light weight, light colour, cotton clothes, covering their head using a cloth, hat or umbrella and by carrying water bottles. "As the temperatures would be hot and humid between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., elderly and people with chronic diseases can avoid visiting the polling booth during this time and instead cast their votes in the early hours of the day to avoid discomfort," he added.

Do not precipitate FIR registered against DKS, HC tells police

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday directed the police not to precipitate the complaint registered against Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar for allegedly inducing, indirectly threatening and blackmailing the voters of a residential apartment complex during campaigning in Rajarajeshwarinagar Assembly constituency, from where his brother D.K. Suresh is contesting the Lok Sabha polls.

Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the interim order on the petition filed by Mr. Shivakumar, which will be in operation till the next date of hearing on the petition.

It was alleged in the complaint, lodged by the Flying Squad Officer of the Election Commission of India, that Mr. Shivakumar had threatened the voters of the apartment complex with consequence if they did not vote for the Congress candidate.

Denying the allegations, Mr. Shivakumar had claimed that he had only assured the residents that their demand for Cauvery water supply and a civic amenity site would be considered if the candidate of the Congress returns in the election. Though the court granted interim protection to Mr. Shivakumar, it asked his advocate to advise him properly on use of language during the campaign.

Battle 2024: It's crucial for three major political parties locally and nationally

The grand old party's leaders, Siddaramaiah and DKS, have set the anti-BJP narrative by launching an aggressive campaign against the Modi govt.

TOUGH CONTEST

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

The electoral fight in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies, which are going to polls on Friday in Karnataka, is significant for all three major parties, and has attracted national attention this time for a variety of reasons.

Why it matters

For the Congress, which launched anti-BJP platform INDIA block in Bengaluru about nine months ago, the poll outcome is significant for providing political stability in the State and increasing the party's tally at the national level.

The BJP, which has set the target of winning 50 seats in south India, considers Karnataka the party's "gateway to the South" and has consistently won more seats than the Congress in the past few elections.

Winning maximum seats in the first phase is crucial not only for the State unit of the BJP to regain its hold but also for reaching the target of seats set by the party at the national level.

The BJP and JD(S) are battling it out in the parliamentary elections against the Congress.

In bipolar contest, the BJP hopes its alliance with former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's JD(S) can help it sweep the State again. For the JD(S), which is apparently facing an "existential crisis" after its drubbing in the 2023 Assembly elections, the poll outcome would determine its future role and relevance.

Of these 14 constituencies, BJP won 11 seats, Congress, JD(S) and Independent one each in 2019.

Vital for CM and Dy. CM

The grand old party's leaders, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar, who hail from southern Karnataka, have set the anti-BJP narrative by launching aggressive campaign against the Narendra Modi-led government on alleged denial of drought relief, share in devolution of taxes and denial of funds and environment clearance for water/irrigation projects in Karnataka.

As both leaders have constantly indulged in a subtle game of one-upmanship, the positive poll outcome is crucial for both leaders to establish their dominance in the party as well as in the State government. The victory in Bengaluru Rural and Mandya constituency is crucial for the KPCC chief, who is vying for the Chief Minister's post in the future. Both leaders have held aggressive campaigns, flagging five "guarantees", and the poll outcome will determine the political equations between two leaders.

Crucial for HDK

The JD (S) in alliance with the BJP is fighting against the Congress in three constituencies of Hassan, Kolar and Mandya. It's a "do-or-die" battle for former Chief Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy, who is keen to enter the Parliament after his first stint in the late 1990s. The victory in Mandya and other two constituencies would enable the JD(S) to regain its lost hold over the Vokkaliga belt of the Old Mysore region, which was captured by the Congress under the leadership of Mr. Shivakumar.

The JD(S) won one seat in 2019.

Voters would also decide the fate of children of Ministers contesting elections for the first time. In Bengaluru South, Sowmya Reddy (Congress), daughter of Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, is fighting against BJP leader Tejasvi Surya. In Chamarajanagar, Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa's son Sunil Bose is taking on S. Balaraj (BJP), former MLA from Kollegal. The poll results might decide the continuation of these Ministers in the Congress government., sources in the Congress said.

Battle of prestige

The Bengaluru Rural constituency has gained a lot of public attention across the State. Mr. Shivakumar's brother D.K. Suresh is in the fray against C.N. Manjunath, cardiologist and son-in-law of JD (S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda.

The Mekedatu, a balancing reservoir, which was planned to cater to the drinking water needs of Bengaluru and other nearby towns falls in this constituency.

The elections in the constituency is seen as a "battle of prestige" for the families of Mr. Deve Gowda and Mr. Shivakumar.

Who is fighting the polls from where

Constituency	NDA candidate (BJP - JD-S)	Party	Congress candidate	Voter turnout (in %) in 2019
Udupi-Chikkamagaluru	Kota Srinivas Poojary	BJP	K. Jayaprakash Hegde	75.91
Hassan	Prajwal Revanna	JD(S)	Shreyas Patel	77.08
Dakshina Kannada	Capt. Brijesh Chowta	BJP	Padmaraj R. Poojary	77.90
Chitradurga	Govind Karjol	BJP	B. N. Chandrappa	70.65
Tumakuru	V. Somanna	BJP	S. P. Muddahanume Gowda	77.21
Mandya	H.D. Kumaraswamy	JD(S)	Venkataramane Gowda	80.23
Mysuru	Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar	BJP	M. Lakshman	69.28
Chamarajanagar	S. Balraj	BJP	Sunil Bose	75.19
Bengaluru Rural	Dr. C.N. Manjunath	BJP	D. K. Suresh	64.90
Bengaluru North	Shobha Karandlaje	BJP	M. V. Rajeev Gowda	54.66
Bengaluru Central	P.C. Mohan	BJP	Mansoor Ali Khan	54.28
Bengaluru South	Tejasvi Surya	BJP	Sowmya Reddy	53.47
Chickballapur	Dr. K. Sudhakar	BJP	Raksha Ramaiah	76.61
Kolar	M. Mallesh Babu	JD(S)	K. V. Gowtham	77.1

Caste and sub-caste factors, besides writ of 'sahukars', will influence results here

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
BELAGAVI

Kanasageri is a small village with an enchanting name that translates to "lane of dreams." It lies within a few kilometres of the Kadabagatti hills in Gokak in Belagavi district that are famous for the sandalwood forest raised by the Forest Department. It is a new moon night and dark all around as there is no power supply. Most people are sleeping in their courtyards to beat the heat.

"We are used to this," says Beerappa Tavag, an octogenarian sheep rearer. Children walk to Urubinahatti village for school, while the young climb up the hill to go to colleges in Gokak.

The people here look up to "sahukars" (as the Jarkiholi brothers of Gokak are referred to) to choose their candidate. Before every election, he and some friends including his relative Holeyappa, a former gram panchayat member, go to Gokak and meet the Jarkiholis who suggest the candidate they should support. "This is how we have voted for the Congress at times and the BJP at the other... For us, it is not the party that is important, it is the leader," said Basappa Banni, a who runs a roadside tea shop. Of the brothers, while Ramesh Jarkiholi and Balachandra Jarkiholi are with the BJP, Satish Jarkiholi is a Minister in the Congress government.

The Belagavi Lok Sabha seat has attracted a lot of attention after Jagadish Shettar, former Chief Minister, was chosen as the BJP candidate, replacing Mangala Angadi, MP and widow of former Union Minister Suresh Angadi. Some local leaders including Prabhakar Kore and Abhay Patil opposed the candidature, but the party high command silenced them saying the ticket had gone to the Angadi family. Mr. Shettar's son is married to Ms. Angadi's daughter. Party workers say the dissent has not completely subsided and senior leaders are still not actively involved in Mr. Shettar's campaign.

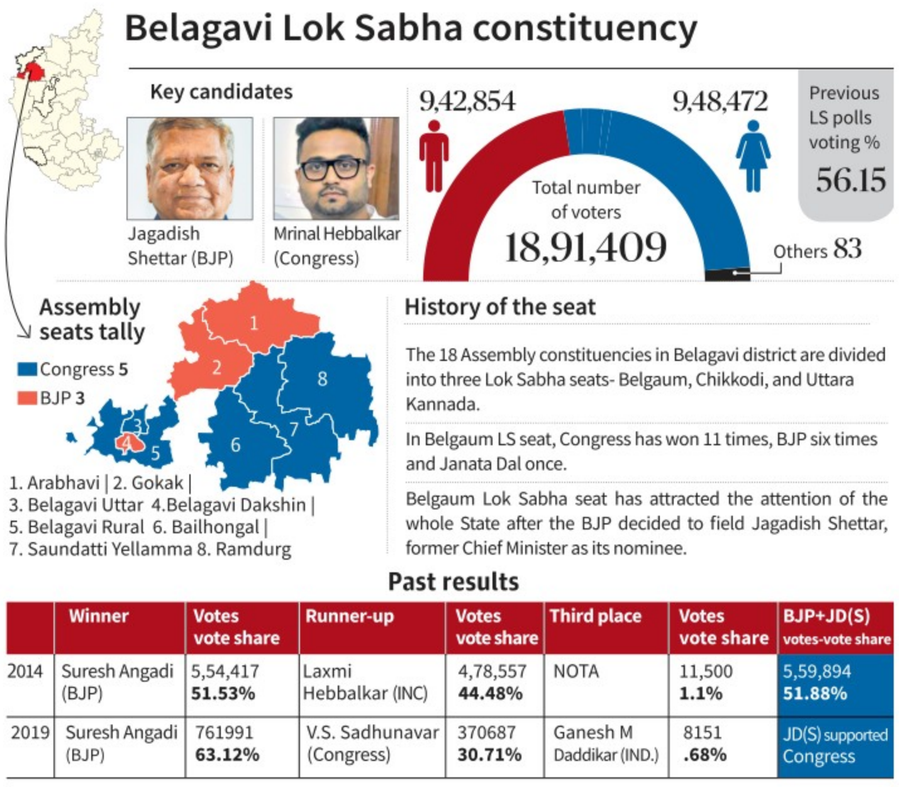
Caste calculations

Mr. Shettar, a Lingayat Banajiga, is pitted against Mrinal Hebbalkar of the Congress, whose mother and Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar is a Lingayat Panchamasali leader with considerable clout. While Banajigas are considered wealthy traders with ownership of lands, farm produce trading houses, cooperative societies and education institutions, Panchamasalis are numerically strong. Mr. Shettar recently organised a rally with Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, BJP MLA and Panchamasali leader, in Gokak, hoping to neutralise the effect of sub-caste politics. BJP insiders say the long standing ill-will between Ramesh Jarkiholi and Ms. Hebbalkar may improve Mr. Shettar's chances. Gokak and Arabavi, the two seats held by Ramesh Jarkiholi and his brother Balachandra Jarkiholi, are part of the Belagavi Lok Sabha seat. In the 2021 bypolls, Ms. Angadi got over 84,000 votes from Gokak, the highest among all the Assembly seats. If repeated, such a franchise could tilt the scales in favour of the BJP, they say.

The BJP-JD(S) alliance seems to be working well in constituencies like Bailhongal. Political rivals - former MLAs Jagadish Metgud and Vishwanath Patil and JD(S) leader Shankar Madalagi - have apparently sunk their differences and are seen campaigning together. It was this rivalry that helped Congress MLA Mahantesh Koujalagi win twice in the past.

Maratha factor

The BJP faces a challenge in Mahadev Patil, veteran Maratha leader fielded by the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti. "In the 2021 bypoll, MES candidate Shubham Shelke took over 1.24 lakh votes, that would have gone to the BJP. In a close fight, the BJP will suffer if the MES repeats this performance," said a Maratha leader. However, Ms. Hebbalkar, who represents the Maratha-dense Belagavi Rural constituency, will take at least a portion of the Maratha vote, he says.


Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency
Key candidates
Jagadish Shettar (BJP)
Mrinal Hebbalkar (Congress)
9,42,854
9,48,472
Total number of voters
18,91,409
Others 83
Previous LS polls voting %
56.15
Assembly seats tally
Congress 5
BJP 3
1. Arabhavi | 2. Gokak |
3. Belagavi Uttar 4.Belagavi Dakshin |
5. Belagavi Rural 6. Bailhongal |
7. Saundatti Yellamma 8. Ramdurg
History of the seat
The 18 Assembly constituencies in Belagavi district are divided into three Lok Sabha seats- Belgaum, Chikkodi, and Uttara Kannada.
In Belgaum LS seat, Congress has won 11 times, BJP six times and Janata Dal once.
Belgaum Lok Sabha seat has attracted the attention of the whole State after the BJP decided to field Jagadish Shettar, former Chief Minister as its nominee.

Past results

	Winner	Votes vote share	Runner-up	Votes vote share	Third place	Votes vote share	BJP+JD(S) votes-vote share
2014	Suresh Angadi (BJP)	5,54,417 **51.53%**	Laxmi Hebbalkar (INC)	4,78,557 **44.48%**	NOTA	11,500 **1.1%**	5,59,894 **51.88%**
2019	Suresh Angadi (BJP)	761991 **63.12%**	V.S. Sadhunavar (Congress)	370687 **30.71%**	Ganesh M Daddikar (IND.)	8151 **.68%**	JD(S) supported Congress

Bengaluru alone records seizure worth ₹46 crore ahead of polls

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Election Commission has made total seizures worth ₹46.11 crore in Bengaluru Urban district alone, which has three Lok Sabha constituencies. According to the data shared by the district election office, a total of 6,552 FIRs have been filed till April 25.

Unaccounted cash

The election officials have seized unaccounted cash to the tune of ₹ 11.83 crore and liquor worth ₹ 19.2 crore. The data show that the Excise Department, along with election officials, seized 4,67,629.634 litres of liquor. The officials have also seized a total of 227.47 kg of narcotic substances worth ₹7.17 crore and 49.58 kg of precious metals, including gold and silver worth ₹53.71 lakh.

Freebies and vehicles

The officials have seized freebies worth ₹1.23 crore and many vehicles worth ₹6.14 crore. The vehicles were used to transport cash, gold, liquor, freebies and others. While the police have registered 129 FIRs, the Excise Department has filed 6,423 cases.

People take part in 'Vote-A-thon', a marathon organised to raise voter awareness ahead of the General elections. PTI

Students with their hands painted urging people to exercise their franchise as part of voter awareness campaign, in Bengaluru. PTI

Students with placards urging people to vote in the Lok Sabha polls. PTI

Many colourful ways to attract people to booths

Election officials roped in youth icons like movie stars, sportsmen, corporate leaders and others to participate in rallies, street marches and other activities to send out a strong message

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To popularise the need to exercise one's franchise, the Election Commission conducted a series of voter awareness campaigns in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka.

While resident welfare associations and youth icons were called in to create voter awareness, the EC organised a 'Namma Nade Matagatte Kade' (walk towards your polling station) and vintage car rally to stress upon the importance of voting. On April 21, a flag hoisting event was held in all the 30,602 polling booths of the 14 parliamentary constituencies that go to the polls on April 26. Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who launched a voter awareness campaign featuring a vintage car and bike rally, on April 21 at Raj Bhavan, emphasised upon the significance of India's status as the world's largest democracy, highlighting the crucial role of voters and electoral stakeholders in fortifying the democratic framework.

"Voting is not just a right but a duty, one that fortifies our nation and its democratic principles," the Governor said, urging citizens to exercise their franchise diligently.

Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka said the lowest voter turnout in the State in the past elections has been from the IT hub of Bengaluru.

"Apathy in the urban electorate is a trend observed across the country. We have learnt some lessons from the previous elections. We roped in resident welfare associations (RWAs) to create awareness and step up our voter slip distribution, especially in gated communities, where our personnel found it difficult to go," he said, adding that awareness activities were carried out in garment factories too.

The District Election Office (DEO) in Bengaluru Urban directed companies to sanction leave to the voters on the voting day, failing which action will be initiated. The labour department has been instructed to shut down offices working on April 26. Hoteliers have also been asked to allow workers to exercise their franchise.

Tushar Giri Nath, DEO for Bengaluru Urban, said election officials roped in youth icons like movie stars, sportsmen, corporate leaders and others to participate in rallies, street marches and other activities to send out a strong message on the importance of voting on the election day.

Artists of Sand Theme of Udupi – Harish Saga, Santhosh Bhat Halady and Ujwal Nitte – made a sand art on the Malpe Beach in Udupi to create awareness among people to vote in the Lok Sabha elections .UMESH S. SHETTIGRAR

Officers and workers take part in a bullock cart rally organised by the district administration to create awareness about voting ahead of Lok Sabha elections, in Chikkamagaluru district. PTI

Publicity material displayed by the SVEEP Committee of Dakshina Kannada at Mannaguddain Mangaluru to create awareness among voters. H.S.MANJUNATH

Vintage cars and bikes take part in the voting awareness programme rally, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, to increase voter awareness and voter turnout, starting from Vidhana Soudha. K. MURALI KUMAR

District Returning Officer and Deputy Commissioner of Dharwad Divya Prabhu, SVEEP committee Chairperson Swaroopa T.K., and Police Commissioner Renuka Sukumar flagged off the voter awareness vehicle and the tableau in Hubballi. KIRAN BAKALE

Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena, at the State Level Caricaturist Workshop and Exhibition, organised by the Office of the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer for voter awareness in connection with the Lok Sabha election , in front of Basavanna's statue on the east side of the Vidhana Soudha.

An artist in traditional attire performs in front of an election signboard during the Vote-A-Thon. AFP

Statiq launches free charging campaign

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Statiq, India's leading EV charging network, is driving sustainable solutions forward with the launch of a free charging campaign in Karnataka through the Statiq app. This initiative is geared towards expediting the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) and advocating for cleaner energy options. Given that many users predominantly opt for home charging and are hesitant to explore public charging options for long-distance or intercity travel, Statiq aims to encourage users to give it a try through this campaign.

According to the release, with over 400+ EV charging points already operational in Karnataka, Statiq reaffirms its commitment to catering to the diverse needs of EV users across the region. These installations are equipped to charge a wide spectrum of electric vehicles, including popular models such as Tata Nexon, MG EVZS, Tata Tiago EV, and more.

The campaign comes at a pivotal moment in India's automotive landscape, with a recent report by Counterpoint Research indicating a surge in EV sales.

Art Park to celebrate its 75th session with artists and their audiences at BIC

Apart from the invited artists who will be painting as they usually do at Art Park, the committee has also called on a few other artists to address the gathering and to execute a few of their signature strokes

Ruth Dhanaraj
BENGALURU

This weekend, Ark Park celebrates a landmark – it is their 75th session in the city and in an age when consistency is rare, their commitment is truly commendable.

The brainchild of one of the city's senior artists, S.G. Vasudev, Art Park began in 2014 as a cultural initiative to involve artists and their audiences. "Galleries come across as being exclusive and not everyone is comfortable walking into one. Many people are wary of meeting artists, while a few artists themselves are quite shy of meeting people. We felt a park would make a great meeting place for both parties," says Vasudev.

Art Park is usually held on the first Sunday of every month at the Sculpture Garden (Shilpavana) in the Ravindra Kalakshetra complex located on Jayachamaraja Wodeyar Road (J.C. Road). However, since their 75th is a milestone event, it will be held at Bangalore International Centre, where other activities will also take place from 11 a.m.

Artists in conversation about their artwork.

Signature strokes

Apart from invited artists who will be painting as they usually do at Art Park, the committee has also called on a few other artists to address the gathering and to execute a few of their signature strokes for those assembled, he says.

Some of the chief guests include Balan Nambiar, PaSa Kumar, M.S. Murthy and Urmila Devi, among others. President of the Art Park Committee Bhagya Ajaikumar as well as Vasudev, honorary president, will speak on the occasion, sharing their experiences dating back to the launch of this initiative. "We will also remember a few artists who have passed on and are no longer with us. Following this, we will screen a few clips from previous editions of Art Park," says Vasudev. There will be a seminar on Art Park's roadmap for the future with panelists Arundhati Nag, Jayakumar G. and Nalini Malaviya who will moderated by Suresh Jayaram.

The event will also see a poetry performance by Mamata Sagar and a music recital by M.D. Pallavi as well as performance art by Dimple Shah at the entrance of the venue.

As is customary with regular Art Park sessions, there will be about 20 to 25 artists present who will be creating works of art on the premises, apart from a few completed works they would have brought along. "At Art Park, the price of our paintings created there are capped at ₹1000, no matter how much they fetch elsewhere or how accomplished the artist," says Vasudev.

The artists

Some of the participating artists for this edition of Art Park include Arasu T.V., Bharathi Sagar, K G Lingadevaru, Mridul Chandra, Sheetal C.S. and Urmila V.G., among others as well as printmakers Akshay Bhat and Puja Kedia.

The 75th edition of Art Park will be held at BIC on April 28, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Entry free.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 26, 1974

Demand for Early Civic Elections

Bengaluru, April 25: Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, opposition Leader, to-day demanded in the State Assembly, a statement from the Government regarding elections to the municipal councils. Participating during the inclusive debate on the demands relating to Justice and Urban Development, he said it would be undemocratic to postpone elections to the superseded municipalities and urged that they be held early.

Some members stressed the need for speedy disposal of cases and provision of basic facilities for the litigant public in the court premises. They also suggested free legal assistance to the poor.

Bendre, Sukhadia Decry Linguistic Chauvinism

Hubli, April 25: The Governor, Mr. M.L. Sukhadia and the poet Laureate, Mr. D.R. Bendre, yesterday came out strongly against linguistic chauvinism, which was threatening national unity.

Participating at a function to felicitate Mr. Bendre, recipient of the Jnanpith award, the Governor paid compliments to the poet for his literary accomplishments in Kannada though his mother tongue was Marathi.

Mr. Bendre regretted the quarrels among different linguistic groups and said they should all realise that the development of language and culture of a region could not be in isolation. He, therefore, called for understanding among people of different states.

Karnataka InFocus

THE HINDU

NUGGETS OF HISTORY

Resources used to build the Vihar

Nearly 600 people, ranging from labourers to architects, from Kalaburagi and Bengaluru in Karnataka, besides Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan, have worked on the project of Buddha Vihar. Around 5 lakh bricks, 1500, tonnes of cement, 250 metric tons of steel and 200 tonnes of sand were used for its construction.

Panchaloha idol of Lord Buddha

The main attraction of the Buddha Vihar in Kalaburagi is the 8.5-foot-tall, beautifully sculpted panchaloha idol of Lord Buddha in a sitting posture. It is a gold-plated idol, which is said to be the biggest of its kind in South India. The idol was brought all the way from Thailand to India in 2004, a good five years before its consecration at Buddha Vihar.

Enduring legacy of Buddha's faith

The sculptures adorning walls of Buddha Vihar depict the Buddha's spiritual and physical journeys, his teachings and the enduring legacy of his faith. The walls of the hall also have carvings illustrating the Tipitaka (Buddhist sacred scriptures), Buddha Charita (poem in Sanskrit in Mahakavya style on the life of Buddha) and several Buddhist tales.

How the centre was conceived and grew

The construction of Buddha Vihar began in 2002 and was originally perceived to be much smaller.
However, the blueprint was changed by the Siddharth Vihar Trust to make it into a Buddhist pilgrimage centre constructed in the conventional Buddhist style. It has also evolved into a centre of Buddhist learning with focus of learning in Pali and Prakrit.

Restoration of Ashokan edicts

The Archeological Survey of India has started restoration of Ashokan edicts discovered during the excavation at Sannati and Kanaganahalli, an ancient Buddhist on the bank of Bhima in Kalaburagi district. It is believed that Ashoka sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to spread Buddhism in this region.

This Buddha Vihara in Karnataka is a place for peace and high learning

Buddhist monks from all the important Buddhist centres, including Bodh Gaya, Saranath, Nagpur and other places, make a beeline for the Buddha Vihar regularly

The Buddha Vihar at Kalaburagi. ARUN KULKARNI

Ashoka Pillar at Buddha Vihar.

Black stone idol of Lord Buddha in the meditation hall at Buddha Vihar. ARUN KULKARNI

Praveen B. Para
KALABURAGI

With a hillock overlooking it and set in green environs, the Buddha Vihar on the outskirts of Kalaburagi city is fast turning into a major centre of Buddhist studies and a centre of research of Pali and Sanskrit languages.

The original Buddhist literature is mostly available in Pali and Sanskrit languages and mastering these two ancient languages is an absolute imperative to study and understand Buddhism and its philosophy. The International Institute of Pail, Sanskrit and Comparative Philosophy established in the sprawling 16 acre in the Buddha Vihar complex provides an opportunity for the scholars of Pail and Sanskrit languages to pursue their research on different aspects of Buddhism and Lord Buddha and his disciples.

Away from the hustle and bustle of Kalaburagi city, the institute provides the perfect setting for research scholars to pursue their research works and more than 10,000 books, stacked in the sprawling library, most of them are rare reference books.Retired Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officer Ramesh Begar, who is the administrative officer of the Siddhartha Vihar Trust, which manages the Buddha Vihar, in a chat with *The Hindu*, said that the institute is now on the verge of introducing post-graduate courses in Pali and Sanskrit languages, under Karnataka Sanskrit University, which would become base for pursuing the doctoral and postdoctoral courses in Buddhism and Lord Buddha. Both the Central and State governments had been liberal in providing funds for the establishment of the Institute and a sum ₹10 crores each has been provided by the Central and the State governments for the establishment of the institute, said Mr. Begar.

The Dalai Lama with the founder Chairman of Siddhartha Vihar Trust Mallikarjun Kharge during the inauguration of Buddha Vihar at Kalaburagi in 2009. ARUN KULKARNI

The library hall in Dhamma complex on the Buddha Vihar premises in Kalaburagi . ARUN KULKARNI

Search for director

After a Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka, who headed the institute at the beginning, returned to his native place to further upgrade his knowledge, senior Buddhist monks from Tripura and Hyderabad headed the institute to guide students admitted in the six-month certificate course in Pali language. The search is now on for a full-time director for the institute and qualified faculty to broadbase its academic activities. So far more than 100 students have successfully completed the certificate course in Pali language.

Mr. Begar said that the construction of a fully air-conditioned modern library and a museum was on in full swing and soon it would be ready for inauguration. Apart from the priceless collection of books, the Trust has a rich collection of rare photographs of the Father of the Constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and a collection of beautiful paintings of Lord Buddha and the important events in the life of Buddha and his disciples. Kalaburagi district and the neighbouring Yadgir district are dotted with several Buddhist remains and the excavations at Kanaganahalli in Chitapur taluk in Kalaburagi revealed the existence of Buddhist civilization in the region at that time and it was during the excavation by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) that the officials came across the image of Emperor Ashoka, carved in a single slab of sandstone along with female attendants and queens. Incidentally, this was the only image of King Ashoka discovered so far. A very big Stupa was also uncovered during the excavation making it one of the important centres of Buddhism fit to be included in the Buddhist tourism circuit. Apart from this many Buddhist and Ashokan edicts have been recovered from many centres in Kalaburagi, Yadgir and Raichur districts.

The imposing Buddha Vihar itself is a masterpiece of modern architecture retaining all the original features of the ancient Buddhist structures all around the world. According to Mr. Begar, a team of architects and the officials who worked on this project had studied books on Buddhism and visited famous Buddha temples across India, Thailand and Singapore to study the structural aspects of various Buddha Vihars and retain the finer points of structural aspects of these buildings during the construction of the Buddha Vihar in Kalaburagi city. The Buddha Vihar has now become an important landmark for the city.

The Buddha Vihar was constructed under the aegis of the Siddhartha Vihar Trust, for which the All India Congress Committee President M. Mallikarjun Kharge is the founder-Chairman. Mr. Kharge is a disciple of Buddhism and an Ambedkarite.

Vihar structure

It took almost seven years to raise the magnificent 70-feet main complex of Buddha Vihar. The construction works on the structure started in February, 2002, and the project was completed in January, 2009. The Buddha Vihar can be divided into the main building which has a Lord Buddha temple on the ground floor and a meditation hall at the cellar. The dome is reminiscent of ancient stupas and Buddhist architecture, and the intricate marble tiling adds a touch of grandeur to this structure. The main dome tiled with marble measures 70-feet in height and 59-feet in diameter is adorned with an ornamental spire crafted from panchaloha (five metals). The intricately carved doors in rosewood and teakwood are designed by Mysuru-based artisan Kaiser Ali. Standing sentinel at the four corners are four Ashoka pillars, each measuring 48 feet tall.

Idol imported from Thailand

The ground floor houses a Buddha temple having 8.5-foot-tall gold-plated idol of the Lord Buddha, imported from Thailand, is said to be the biggest sitting idol of the Lord Buddha in south India. This temple structure is spread over a 15,500 sq ft area with 170 pillars and 284 blocks on ceiling. Each block is intricately carved depicting a tale of a different architectural marvel resembling the Buddha temples of Ajanta, Nagpur, Bodh Gaya, Lumbini, Japan, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

The meditation hall in the cellar has a 6.5-foot-tall black stone Buddha idol made by Bidadi-based famous sculptor Ashok Gudigar. The Lord Buddha seated on a lotus, crafted with exquisite attention to detail, capturing the divine attributes and serene countenance of meditating Buddha that emanates a spiritual aura and divine presence, evoking a sense of peace, serenity and reverence.

In a green landscape

The main complex of Buddha Vihar is in the midst of the garden with a variety of ornamental plants and trees. On the right side of the main complex is a 2,000-seating capacity open-air theatre and the left side of the complex attracts visitors with a group of 11 cement statues led by a bronze statue of Dr. Ambedkar indicating the Dhamma Kranti Yatra of 1956. The installation pays homage to the social reformer for his tireless efforts for revival of Buddhism in India.

The entrance arch of the Buddha Vihar is constructed in the shape of a peepal (Bodhi) leaf that symbolises enlightenment. A beautiful landscape garden stretches from the main entrance to the Vihara complex.

The U-shaped Dhamma complex houses study centre, photo gallery, conference hall and exhibition hall. Recently, a six-foot-high marble idol of Lord Buddha has reached the museum hall in the Dhamma complex, which was donated by a television actor Gagan Malik.

The Buddha Vihar was inaugurated by the then President of India Pratibha Patil in January, 2009, in presence of Dalai Lama, Tibetan spiritual leader. The then Governor Rameshwar Thakur, former chief ministers B.S. Yediyurappa and the Late N. Dharm Singh attended the inaugural function of the Buddha Vihar.

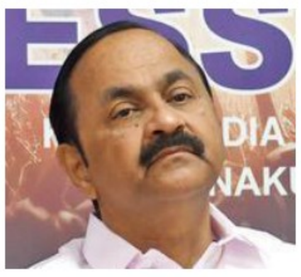
Nobel Laureate the Dalai Lama visited the Buddha Vihar twice - during its inaugural function and also on the first anniversary. He underlined the need for developing this Centre into one for higher learning in Buddhism instead of keeping it a religious place.

The Buddha Vihar draws huge crowds during the full moon days. The Buddhist monks from all the important Buddhist centres including Bodh Gaya, Saranath, Nagpur and other places make a beeline to the Buddha Vihar regularly. Devotees from the neighbouring Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra throng the Buddha Vihar on all important occasions in the Buddhist calendar, more particularly during the Buddha Purnima, Dasara, and birth and death anniversaries of Ambedkar.

Delhi L-G violated MCC, says Kerala Leader of Opposition

Satheesan asks Election Commission to initiate urgent action against V.K. Saxena, says the L-G requested audience with several heads of churches to 'lure' them to take a stand in favour of BJP

Press Trust of India
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



> The Delhi Lt. Governor visiting various church heads in Kerala... to garner votes for the BJP is a blot on democracy and its founding values
> **V.D. SATHEESAN**
> Kerala Opposition leader

On the eve of polling day in Kerala, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly V.D. Satheesan on Thursday urged the Election Commission to take action against Delhi's Lieutenant-Governor for allegedly visiting heads of churches in the southern State to "lure" them to take a stand in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha election.

Senior Congress leader Satheesan, in a letter to the Commission, alleged "blatant violation of the Model Code of Conduct" by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena through his meeting of church heads in Kerala.

Mr. Satheesan claimed that Mr. Saxena, who is on a two-day visit to Kerala, requested an audience with the heads of the Syro Malabar Church, Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, and others.

Mr. Satheesan contended that the Governor was a constitutional head of State and was restricted from involvement in any political activity.

"However, the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor visiting various church heads in Kerala just ahead of the Lok Sabha elections to garner votes for the BJP is a blot on democracy and its founding values," he alleged.

The Congress leader requested the EC to "initiate urgent action" against the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor for MCC violation.

LDF convener plans to join BJP, alleges Kerala Congress chief

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president K. Sudhakaran has alleged that CPI(M) leader and Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener E.P. Jayarajan is considering a shift to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Addressing the media in Kannur on Thursday, Mr. Sudhakaran said it was Mr. Jayarajan, not him, who was inclined to join the BJP.

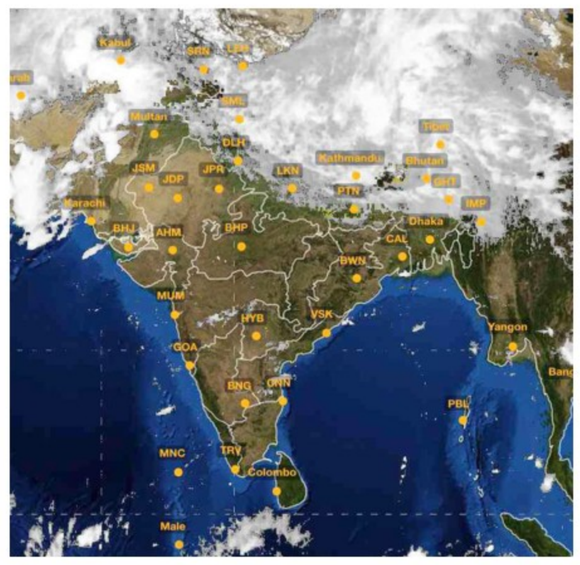
The discussions between Mr. Jayarajan and the BJP leadership reportedly began in the Gulf, facilitated by a mediator whose identity cannot be revealed, Mr. Sudhakaran said.

Mr. Sudhakaran added that Mr. Jayarajan was enticed with the promise of a gubernatorial position by the BJP and claimed the latter was discontent at M.V Govindan replacing him as party State secretary.

Mr. Jayarajan countered the accusations raising Mr. Sudhakaran's own flirtations with the BJP. He said Mr. Sudhakaran allegedly tried to join the BJP and even made a trip to Chennai for the purpose. He accused Mr. Sudhakaran of meeting BJP leader Amit Shah, insinuating a deliberate intent to switch parties.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds/hailstorm likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra and Kerala. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and coastal Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.8	27.4	Kozhikode	—	37.9	28.6
Ahmedabad	—	41.3	27.5	Kurnool	—	43.7	28.3
Aizawl	—	—	21.5	Lucknow	—	40.6	22.9
Allahabad	—	43.4	23.4	Madurai	—	39.5	26.5
Bengaluru	—	37.4	24.8	Mangaluru	—	35.2	26.7
Bhopal	—	40.2	23.0	Mumbai	—	34.9	26.5
Bhubaneswar	0.2	42.2	24.4	Mysuru	—	35.0	21.0
Chandigarh	—	37.4	19.6	New Delhi	—	39.4	20.0
Chennai	—	35.2	28.4	Patna	—	41.0	26.5
Coimbatore	—	39.6	25.6	Port Blair	—	33.5	27.1
Dehradun	—	36.0	18.5	Puducherry	—	35.5	27.0
Gangtok	—	23.4	14.9	Pune	—	39.7	25.7
Goa	—	33.7	26.0	Raipur	—	40.0	26.3
Guwahati	—	34.0	23.5	Ranchi	—	38.0	22.6
Hubballi	—	38.0	24.0	Shillong	—	28.1	16.0
Hyderabad	—	40.8	26.2	Shimla	—	27.4	14.7
Imphal	12	32.5	16.7	Srinagar	0.2	25.0	8.2
Jaipur	—	39.6	27.1	Thiruvananthapuram	3	35.3	25.0
Kochi	5	33.6	26.2	Tiruchi	—	40.2	27.6
Kohima	—	25.6	18.7	Vijayawada	—	41.8	27.4
Kolkata	—	41.0	29.0	Visakhapatnam	—	34.6	27.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.18	..69	.41	...148	...135	
Bengaluru	.10	..17	.23	...100	...114	
Chennai	...4	9	102	56	57	
Delhi	.43	130	.46	...217	...285	
Hyderabad	.19	..32	.29	94	90	
Kolkata	...7	..33	.27	55	...142	
Lucknow	.11	..54	.24	...195	...128	
Mumbai	..—	..24	.35	...228	96	
Pune	.85	..99	115	78	77	
Visakhapatnam	.14	..52	.23	59	...108	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 279 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 38

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INBRIEF

BJP will change Constitution, abolish quota, says Revanth

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday said the BJP's slogan of '400-plus' seats was to get the required numbers to change the Constitution. Releasing a chargesheet against the BJP government in Hyderabad, he said that after the Lok Sabha election, the BJP's plan was to abolish reservation in the country. "The slogan of 400 seats is nothing but a slogan to change the Constitution that runs India," he said.

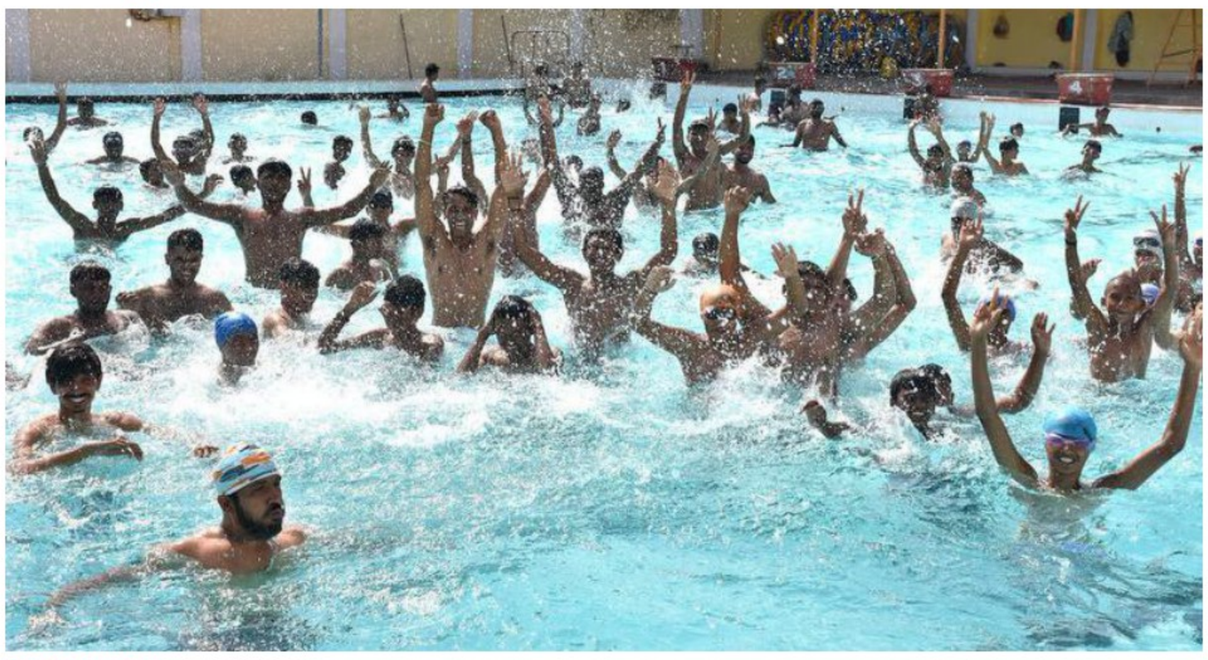
Congress made Telangana 'Delhi's ATM', says Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday alleged that the ruling Congress in Telangana had made the State "Delhi's ATM". He was addressing an election rally at Siddipet. "Congress party has made Telangana 'Delhi's ATM'. Congress party is not investigating the corruption of TRS (BRS), whether it is Kaleshwaram (project) or land scam. TRS and Congress party, both are in cahoots. You make Modi*ji* PM for third term, Narendra Modi*ji* will liberate Telangana from this corruption," he said. PTI

Foreign vlogger couple allege sexual harassment in Kerala

An American-English vlogger couple, in a recent video shared in their Instagram account, have alleged that they faced sexual harassment at the Thrissur Pooram venue. In a video, one of the vloggers said they had a wonderful time at the Thrissur Pooram, but there were "questionable moments" too. In the video, the vlogger was speaking to a pooram enthusiast, who tried to forcibly kiss her. The video continued with the other vlogger saying that he was also groped by a man who was in his 50s.

Beating the heat



Finding respite: A swimming pool in Mysuru drawing a large crowd in the searing heat in the district. The India Meteorological Department has issued a five-day heat wave orange alert for parts of Karnataka, lasting till April 29. M.A. SRIRAM

Tribals sore as parties in Karnataka overlook their woes

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A tribal community in Mysuru district. Owing to indifference by political parties, tribals prepared their own manifesto, which was distributed to party workers and to the local leaders of different political parties, at Hunsur on April 21, 2024. M.A. SRIRAM

For the nearly 40,000 tribals in Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency, elections provide a once-in-a-five-year opportunity to make themselves heard by the political parties in Karnataka.

But as the campaigning ended for the polls to be held on April 26, it transpired that neither the BJP nor the Congress bothered to address their grievances, including implementation of the Forest Rights Act and the right to collect minor forest produce.

"Though party workers visited some of the hamlets, or hadis, the candidates themselves were not to be seen during the campaign," said S. Sreekanth of Development through Education (DEED), an NGO advocating the cause of tribal communities.

What is disconcerting is that the plight of the tribals and the desire to improve their living conditions have not found a mention in the manifesto for Mysuru and Kodagu region released by the Congress while the BJP simply spoke of promoting organic growth of the region without disturbing nature.

Based on their earlier experience and in anticipation of a repetition of the same indifference, the tribals prepared their own manifesto, which was distributed to the party workers and to the local leaders of different political parties, at Hunsur on April 21.

At a meeting of tribal community leaders at DEED, participants decided to apprise political parties and the Karnataka government of their long-pending demands.

P.K. Ramu, president of Budakattu Krishikara Sangha, said that unless there is representation for the tribals in local bodies, like gram panchayat and zilla panchayat, the policy-makers will ignore their issues.

"We are referring to genuine tribals, and not the communities notified under Scheduled Tribes wherein only one or two dominant groups hog all the benefits," said Mr. Sreekanth. He pointed out that well-organised communities like Naik, Parivara, Valmiki, Talawara have hogged all the benefits while the remaining communities under the schedule tribe category have been left high and dry, as they are numerically small, including the forest-dwelling tribes or adivasis.

Apart from reservation for forest-dwelling communities in local bodies, the tribals also want access to their ancestral burial grounds and places of worship.

One of their main demands is the rehabilitation of 3,418 tribal families, as per the directions of the High Court of Karnataka, besides inclusion of nearly 1,500 tribal families from Hunsur whose names have been left out from the list of voters.

Their other demands include basic issues like repair of roads leading to their hamlets and provision of drinking water.

Though it will be the 18th parliamentary elections besides 16 Assembly elections, the lot of the tribal communities, mainly Jenu Kurubas, Betta Kurubas, Yaravas, and Soligas, to name a few, have not improved.

But, despite their disappointment with the political class for ignoring their plight, their faith in electoral democracy to bring about an improvement in their living conditions, has not eroded.

"The concept of boycotting an election is alien to a majority of them," said Mr. Sreekanth.

The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling in Karnataka from April 27

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The 22nd edition of The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling 2024 will be held at 12 locations in eleven cities across Karnataka from April 27.

The event will provide guidance on the UPSC exam, CET counselling, and NEET Counselling from the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) while also providing career guidance on courses in Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Fashion Designing, Journalism, Animation, Performing Arts, Management, Engineering, Medicine, and architecture.

The event will provide a platform to connect students and parents with experts and educational institutions. It will also help students make the right decisions after getting the right counselling and guidance.

The Hindu EducationPlus Career Counselling 2024

Place	Date	Venue	Address
Bengaluru South	27/04/2024	Mangala Mantapa Auditorium NMKRV College	22nd Cross, Jayanagar 3rd Block, Bengaluru
Hubballi	27/04/2024	K.L.E. Society's Biotechnology Auditorium	B.V.B. College of Engineering & Technology Campus, Vidyanagar, Hubballi
Ballari	27/04/2024	Basavarajeswari Public School & College	Anantapur Road, Ballari
Davangere	28/04/2024	Bapuji B School	Lakeview Campus, S.S. Layout, Shamanur Road
Mangaluru	11/05/2024	Geetha S.M. Shetty Hall	Ramakrishna College, Bunts Hostel Circle, Mangaluru
Bengaluru Central	11/05/2024	Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College of Science, Arts and Commerce	9, Race Course Road, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru
Raichur	11/05/2024	Navodaya Institute of Technology Auditorium	Navodaya Nagar, Bijanagera Road, Raichur
Mysuru	11/05/2024	Sahukar Chennaiah Auditorium	Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, P.B. No. 206, Gokulam III Stage, Mysuru
Vijayapura	11/05/2024	BLDECET	BLDEA's V.P. Dr. P.G. Halakatti College of Engineering and Technology, Ashram Road, Adarsh Nagar
Bidar	18/05/2024	Sri Poojya Channa Basava Pattadevaru Rang Mandir	Near district stadium, Bidar
Tumakuru	19/05/2024	Birla Auditorium	Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumakuru
Kalaburagi	19/05/2024	Poojya Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan	Poojay Doddappa Appa Sabha Bhavan, Sharana Basava University, Kalaburagi

Registration

Timing for registration is between 9 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.

Platinum Sponsor is Presidency University and Reva University.

Gold Sponsors are Gitam University, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, RV University, SRM University AP, Mahindra University, Hindustan Group of Institutions Chennai, and Cambridge Institute of Technology.

Silver Sponsors are Christ University, JSS Science & Technology University, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, Indian Institute of Fashion Technology, Soundarya Institutions, SRM IST Ramapuram Campus, Chanakya University, CMR University, East Point Group of Institution, Karnataka State Open University, Malnad College of Engineering, IIBS, Kammavari Sangha Institute of Technology, St Joseph Engineering College, and Praxis Tech School.

Associate Sponsors are SDM Dharwad, Shaheen Independent PU College, Khaja Bandanawaz University, Sharnbasva University, KLE Technological University, Visvesvaraya Technological University, BLDE Association Vijayapura, Karnataka Bank, Navkis College of Engineering.

Regional Sponsor is Parivarthana Business School.

The event will provide a platform to connect students and parents with experts and educational institutions. It will also help students make the right decisions after counselling

The event will be held between 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. For details, contact: 9845095781 / 9448160126 / 9448871815. Entry is free. All participating students will get career counselling book free.

HM in T.N. suspended

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPPUR

Acting on reports that two girl students belonging to a Scheduled Caste (Arunthathiyar) community were made to clean toilets at the Government Middle School in D. Kumarapalayam in Dharapuram Taluk, the School Education Department suspended the headmistress, Ilamathi Eashwari, on Wednesday. Ms. Eashwari, who belongs to the Parayar sub-sect of the Dalit community, alleged that the girls were "manipulated" into making the allegation.

The suspension order was issued after officials of the Revenue and School Education Departments held an inquiry with the headmistress. She is due to retire in a few days.

The inquiry was conducted based on a video clip showing the two students cleaning a toilet and narrating their predicament. The video was reportedly recorded by a caretaker of Ambedkar Padippagam.

'Maintain hygiene'

The headmistress had reportedly advised all the students to maintain cleanliness by following hygienic practices in school. The School Management Committee members claimed that the two students had been misled into levelling the allegation.

An official of the Revenue Department acknowledged that the other students had a positive opinion of the headmistress and teachers of the school.

Courting action

Courts should deal firmly with violators of existing food safety regulations

"The Union has to activate itself," Justice Hima Kohli, who is heading the Supreme Court Bench hearing the case against Patanjali Ayurved and its leaders Acharya Balkrishna and Baba Ramdev, observed on April 23 in the context of the government not having taken any action against the company for publishing advertisements touting untested, pseudoscientific cures for COVID-19, diabetes, and other conditions. The Bench also took cognisance of a report that the baby formula Nestlé sells in India contains more sugar than its corresponding product in Europe, and expanded the Patanjali Ayurved matter's remit to include all fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies publishing misleading advertisements. India has been recording a surge in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) thanks to the easy availability of ultra-processed foods, together with sedentary lifestyles. Manufacturers have also been known to include some vitamins, say, in order to escape scrutiny, but their product is still 'junk'. In the last month, the apex court has sought public apologies from Patanjali Ayurved *et al.* for advertising misleading claims even after the Court directed them to stop; the Bench chided the defendants for publishing a diminutive advertisement. There is some uncertainty now over whether the Court will accept the latest apology, but herein lies the rub.

The expectation that the Court will "activate" itself because the existing apparatus to regulate, report, and sanction misleading advertisements is complaints-led as well as dysfunctional is dangerous. The Court asked the Ministry of AYUSH why it did not act on the allegedly bad advertisements the Advertising Standards Council of India had flagged; the Council itself has no instruments by which it can force compliance. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has specified the permissible thresholds of ingredients in various food products yet is infamously reluctant to pull up errant manufacturers; it also remains understaffed, underequipped, and underfunded. The task of regularly calling out unscientific claims has thus fallen to variously informed members of civil society, from ill-qualified 'influencers' to licensed medical practitioners, yet they do not enjoy protection from retributive, expensive, and tedious legal action. As such, FMCG marketing should be subject to prompt enforcement and timely action. Its absence is responsible for the proliferation of unfalsifiable claims regarding nourishment as well as the growing disunion between India's concern about NCDs and the foods available to the people. But the courts should only review legislation, not lead it. Quick, exemplary action against violators in the cases before it, and not overenthusiastic encroachment of legislative and executive power, is what is expected of the judiciary.

Stability in Maldives

India should not allow Muizzu's win to affect ties between the two countries

There are several important messages from the win by Maldives President Mohammad Muizzu's party, the PNC, in this week's parliamentary elections. The PNC's "super-majority" – over 70 of 93 Members of Parliament or People's Majlis, including allies and independents – also eases Mr. Muizzu's path to passing laws and even making constitutional amendments. The opposition in the Majlis, led by the former ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), that was perceived as "pro-India" won just 12 seats, while parties floated by the former Presidents, Abdullah Yameen and Mohammad Nasheed drew a blank. Mr. Muizzu will be in the spotlight for how he wields the near-absolute power, in a country which has seen authoritarian rule for decades. The results also indicate widespread approval by Maldivians of decisions he has made since he was elected in November 2023 including his international visits to China, Turkey and the UAE, and receiving U.S. senior officials, while keeping a relative distance from India. During his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December, he insisted on a total withdrawal of Indian troops maintaining aircraft for humanitarian operations in the archipelago, which he has now enforced. He has also scrapped a hydrography agreement with India, while strengthening ties with China, to "rebalance" and end dependence on any foreign power. Meanwhile, Maldivian leaders and commentators have expressed concern over majoritarian trends in India. Derogatory comments about Mr. Modi by Maldivian Ministers have added to the unease in India. Indian tourist figures have also dropped.

With the Maldivian results in, and the Indian election results in June, New Delhi and Male have an occasion to try and mend their frayed ties. Relations have been traditionally good, and should not oscillate with changes in each government. Unfortunately, this has been the trajectory for the past decade. Mr. Muizzu's statement that rather than "pro-India" or "pro-China", he intends to build a "pro-Maldives" policy must be tested against his actions while giving him time to prove that none of those actions is to the detriment of India's security or regional peace. Given Maldives's economic troubles and development needs, its challenges with climate change, and its geographical allure for the U.S. and China, it is only a matter of time that the relative comfort of stronger ties with India and its policy of sustainable financing and support, becomes apparent to Male. To be truly successful, a mutual policy of "Neighbourhood first" can only be voluntary and based on mutual trust and interests.

Questioning the polls 'rain washes out play' moments

Ashok Lavasa

is a former Election Commissioner and a former Finance Secretary of India

Getting elected unopposed is perfectly legal in the existing provisions of electoral laws and practice. It is also thrilling. You emerge as the unrivalled representative of the people without the people having chosen you because you are the only choice on the ballot. It is like achieving something without making the requisite effort.

Rule 11 of the Conduct of Election Rules 1961 says: "(1) The returning officer shall... cause a copy of the list of contesting candidates to be affixed in some conspicuous place in his office and where the number of contesting candidates is equal to, or less than, the number of seats to be filled, he shall, immediately after such affixation, declare under sub-section (2) or as the case may be, sub-section (3) of section 53 the result of the election in such one of the Forms 21 to 21B as may be appropriate...."

Democratic rights, the process

Yes, in such a scenario, there is a victor but there is no 'vanquished' party. There are only those who are ruled out under the Rules and those who decided to 'voluntarily' withdraw. We must remember the recent example of the Surat Lok Sabha seat where the two candidates were disqualified and eight others withdrew. The purpose of this article is not to question the circumstances behind the extraordinary sequence of events but to go deeper into the process underlying the exercise of democratic rights.

Similarly, 10 other Assembly seats were procured in Arunachal Pradesh. Section 53 of The Representation of the People Act, 1951 says: "(1) If the number of contesting candidates is more than the number of seats to be filled, a poll shall be taken.] (2) If the number of such candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, the returning officer shall forthwith declare all such candidates to be duly elected to fill those seats."

The question raised by some is that this process does not allow electors to exercise the None of the Above (NOTA) option. The NOTA option was not originally provided for in law but incorporated on court directions to 'enlighten' political parties and candidates about what some people thought of them.

That NOTA does not impact the election process in any way might sound insulting to those who think that way. The pity is that it does not even seem to affect political parties in any way whatsoever. Thus, what was conceived to be a progressive reform to influence the political culture hangs over the system like an "ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain".

However, the real question arises here: what happens if no one opts to contest the election or if all the electors boycott the election and "have failed to elect a person...to fill the vacancy"?

Is the Election Commission of India bound to call upon the constituency to elect a person again as it happens when say in government procurement there are unresponsive bids or no bids are received?

> The Surat and Arunachal Pradesh results are issues that call for debate where an election is made to seem 'free and fair' despite people not having cast a single vote

The financial rules parallel

Interestingly, the General Financial Rules (GFRs), which is a compilation of rules and orders of Government of India to be followed by all while dealing with matters involving public finances (it was amended in a comprehensive manner when I was Union Finance and Expenditure Secretary), speak about "a fair, transparent and reasonable procedure" for public procurement. Rule 166, for instance, provides for a 'Single Tender Enquiry' that can be resorted to if the supplier is the original manufacturer, or in case of an emergency, or if there is a technical necessity for standardisation purpose. However, it does say in Rule 173(xx) that lack of competition "shall not be determined solely on the basis of the number of bidders. Even when only one bid is submitted, the process may be considered valid provided the procurement was satisfactorily advertised and sufficient time was given for submission of bids, the qualification criteria were not unduly restrictive, and prices are reasonable in comparison to market values".

The procedure followed under the Representation of the People Act (RPA) meets all these requirements although the two are in no way related. The similarity may be in the sense that electors are meant to choose from the available alternatives and if there is only a 'single bidder' to represent them they are not required to make a choice.

So, in a sense, the "elector" (defined in the RPA as "a person whose name is entered in the electoral roll of that constituency for the time being in force and who is not subject to any of the disqualifications") is completely excluded from the process of choosing his representative. A person who does not have even a single vote would sit in Parliament to legislate on behalf of the entire constituency.

This to my mind is the dichotomy that the present electoral process creates. It is designed to be pragmatic even if it appears not entirely fair. Unless there is a conflicting demand on their vote, the voters' choice is presumed because they have no choice. Does it mean that the election process can be controlled or manipulated by a handful of candidates who have the means to nullify the right of millions of voters? In an extreme situation, all the candidates in 543 parliamentary constituencies (even if they are 10,000 representing different political parties or independents) could game the system and deny a billion electors their statutory right by complying with the process but seriously wounding the spirit of democracy.

What can be done to remedy this remote but not impossible, extreme possibility?

It could be argued that voters could also be denied their right if there are no candidates to contest. The democratic process is fulfilled only when there is interest among the contestants and the voters. Someone has to seek your vote for you to cast it.

The candidate is at the fore

The system is weighed in favour of the contesting candidates because the RPA provides that a complete boycott will be treated as everyone receiving zero vote and covered under Section 65 which deals with 'Equality of votes'. It reads thus: "If, after the counting of the votes is completed, an equality of votes is found to exist between any candidates, and the addition of one vote will entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, the returning officer shall forthwith decide between those candidates by lot, and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote". The will of the people is replaced by the expediency of the system in identifying who will represent the people who did not participate in the process. It is quite a paradox considering that democracy is defined as a "government of the people, by the people and for the people".

The RPA provides for issuing another notification if there are no candidates filing their nomination the first time but is silent if the same thing is repeated thereafter. However, it has a solution by completely excluding people if they abstain from elections and are deprived from the NOTA option because NOTA has no significance in the democratic exercise. Candidates can nullify the process but people collectively cannot. Does that mean that we consider amending the first-past-the-post system by introducing a minimum percentage of votes for the winning candidate? Similarly, if no candidate offers herself for elections the second time, should that seat be transferred to the nominated category where the President of India can nominate a person as per prescribed qualifications without consulting the government?

These are issues that call for a wide-ranging debate so that we can avoid the prospect of 'rain washes out play' or a 'collusive walkover' making the election seem 'free and fair' without giving people the opportunity to cast their vote without being subdued by fear or swayed by favours.

The war on Gaza and America's paradoxical role

Chetan Rana

is an Associate Editor at 9DASHLINE and a PhD candidate (Diplomacy and Disarmament) at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Over 34,000 people are dead, i.e., nearly 33,000 Palestinians, 1,200 Israelis, 97 journalists and media workers, and hundreds of aid workers. Most of the Israeli casualties were the result of the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023. And over 100 hostages still remain unaccounted for. However, the Israeli attack that has followed since that day of terror, is one of the worst in humanity. The tragedy is playing out on live broadcast and people cannot plead ignorance. It is important to remember that the conflict did not start on October 7.

There has been growing criticism of Israel for this massacre, but its western allies are equally culpable, most notably the United States.

Hypocrisy of neutrality

Historically, the U.S. has been the primary supporter of Israeli statehood. It was the first country to recognise it. The U.S. has helped Israel's survival in an extremely hostile neighbourhood. Superficially, it has led efforts for the two-state solution following the 1973 Arab-Israel war in various forms including U.S. President Jimmy Carter's Camp David talks, Bill Clinton's Parameters for the two-state solution, George Bush's Road Map to Peace, and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's Six Principles.

The U.S. may act as a neutral arbiter but has been the force behind Israel's settler colonialism. It has regularly vetoed to protect Israel from UNSC resolutions claiming the UN, an organisation designed and dominated by the U.S. and its allies, is biased against the Jewish state. The U.S. is Israel's largest trading partner and its aid contributes to 16% of Israel's military expenditure. The Arab-Israel ties normalisation drive, often brokered by America, has gradually removed the Palestinian cause from Arab politics. If Israeli settler colonialism is a monster, then the U.S. is Dr. Frankenstein.

> Gaza is a reminder of the high costs of geopolitical manoeuvres and the real-world impact of normless international diplomacy

The American hypocrisy of neutrality was most visible in President Donald Trump's 'Peace to Prosperity' plan, a brainchild of Jared Kushner, which proposed to further take away land from the Palestinians, hand Jerusalem to Israel, and failed to provide Palestinians with the right to return or have a military defence after statehood. It was a completely pro-Israel plan and rightly rejected by the Palestinian Authority.

Under the Biden administration

Under the Biden administration, U.S.-Israel relations have been relatively low due to Benjamin Netanyahu's attack on the judiciary, the coalition with the far right, and the attack on the Al Aqsa mosque. But the work on the Abraham Accords continued and the fundamentals of Israel-U.S. ties remained strong. Therefore, it was no surprise that Joe Biden in his October 10, 2023 address ("Remarks by President Biden on the Terrorist Attacks in Israel") stated that 'the United States has Israel's back'.

Despite domestic fiscal pressure, Mr. Biden has bankrolled Israel's war on Gaza. The U.S. is also at the forefront of rallying western allies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and France behind Israel's right to defend itself while fuelling a live genocide. It blocked a resolution for a humanitarian pause early on in the crisis. The administration even bypassed the Congress to allow weapons sales to Israel. But Israel's near absolute destruction of Gaza and a possible full-scale invasion of Rafah are testing the American limits as well.

Mr. Biden is facing pressure from within the Democratic party which is pushing for a ceasefire, provision of aid for the Palestinians, and conditioning support to Israel. There is a growing rift between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Biden when it comes to the course of action in the coming weeks. The U.S. also abstained from voting on a UNSC resolution calling for a ceasefire.

The Houthis' disruption of Bab el-Mandeb and Iran's retaliation after the Israeli attack on its consulate in Damascus can have a domino effect. The unwillingness of the West to influence Israel may lead the states to sleepwalk into a region-wide violent conflict.

The domestic factors are equally important in understanding Mr. Biden's policy. With the upcoming election, the Trump campaign will pursue grandstanding with an eye on the American Jewish community and the Evangelical Christians. Mr. Biden, keen to build a broad voter base, may end in brinkmanship with Mr. Trump. There is only one winner in that contest.

On true leadership

The people, like the students in Columbia, have shown more spine than the American leadership. A case has even been filed against the Biden administration in court for its complicity in the genocide. Globally, countries such as South Africa and Bangladesh have shown true Global South leadership, unlike the states that merely seek the title. In a painful irony, it is not the murder of over 25,000 women and children but the death of seven World Central Kitchen workers that shook the American leadership. This grim reality underscores a perennial truth in global politics: all lives are equal, but some are more equal than others.

Despite its unique position to influence peace, the U.S. continues to play a paradoxical role, simultaneously capable of ending violence and perpetuating the status quo, as evidenced by its recent veto against full recognition of Palestine. As the world watches, Israel's war on Gaza serves as a brutal reminder of the high costs of geopolitical manoeuvres and the real-world impact of normless international diplomacy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sharper attacks

It is a sorry state of affairs when the Prime Minister of a secular country begins to target another party by saying that if that party came to power it would distribute wealth to a particular community. I presume that the Bharatiya Janata Party is losing hope of retaining power on its own and so is playing the religious card to polarise voters. The Indian Overseas Congress president Sam Pitroda too has unnecessarily stirred up a hornet's nest regarding inheritance tax prevalent in the United States, which does not fit in here.

Kolikonda Sarathbabu,
Khammam, Telangana

As equality before the law for all Indians is enshrined in the Constitution and the Congress addresses it in its election manifesto, the Prime Minister calling it a "dangerous game" is nothing but divisive and aimed at whipping up passions towards a certain community, which is an agenda in itself (Page 1, April 25). As inflammatory speeches and hurting religious sentiments have become an integral part of Mr. Modi's election rallies and are violative of the Model Code of Conduct and the Representation of People Act, that only the Prime Minister is getting away with anything — all under the very gaze of the Election Commission of India — leaves a lot to be desired.

Prabhu Raj R.,
Bengaluru

No former Prime Minister of India including A.B. Vajpayee has stooped to such a low level as the incumbent one in targeting the political Opposition. That there is demand for action against the top leader indicates how grave his speech and its impact is. One hopes that good sense prevails on Mr. Modi which makes him understand that he is the Prime Minister of the country — and for people of all faiths.

A. Jainulabdeen,
Chennai

As a senior citizen and professor, I have been racking my brain to try and decode the statement of the Prime Minister on the Congress's election manifesto — that its promises of social justice and wealth redistribution would be detrimental to the nation, deprive people of their rights, and harm Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs. Having found no rationale, I have concluded that it is a last-ditch effort on the part of the BJP to try and polarise the electorate, and create social unrest for electoral gains, On the achievements of the Modi government for the last 10 years and promises for next five, there is no mention of unemployment, rising prices, poverty, and corruption.

The Introduction of bullet trains and making India the third largest economy in the world simply do not translate into benefiting the common man.

Dr. Biju C. Mathew,
Thiruvananthapuram

Can green credits benefit India's forests?

Vaibhav Chaturvedi
is Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water

Debadityo Sinha
is Senior Resident Fellow, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

PARLEY

The Green Credit Programme, announced by the Environment Ministry in October 2023, is a market-based mechanism where individuals and companies can claim incentives called 'green credits' for contributions to environmental and ecological restoration. However, there is criticism that these initiatives may be used to circumvent existing laws, particularly those that deal with forest conservation. Can green credits benefit India's forests? Vaibhav Chaturvedi and Debadityo Sinha discuss this in a conversation moderated by **Jacob Koshy**. Edited excerpts:

Vaibhav, how do you understand the green credit programme as it stands today?

Vaibhav Chaturvedi: The larger point is we have to incentivise green action and sustainable action and create a system where green actions are undertaken by many actors. You could do it in different ways such as having a 'command and control' policy that directs everybody to undertake action at the risk of penalties. But in policymaking, the role of incentives is important. Green credits fit in as an incentive architecture to deliver on, for instance, water conservation and afforestation by involving individuals and corporations.

Debadityo Sinha: This is a market-based incentive mechanism, and it has six or seven sectors, including forest and waste management. But it matters how you execute it on the ground. Are those implementing it aware of ground-level challenges? What is the expertise of the people implementing it? The scheme is not a bad one, but going by the guidelines alone, it could have been better. It is taking a very narrow view of only planting trees to earn credits. It has missed out on several other aspects of the ecosystem.

The guidelines aim to incentivise the restoration of degraded forest land. A forest can degrade for a variety of reasons, natural and man-made. Afforestation may seem like a positive end in itself, but couldn't there be negative consequences too? Such as monocultures or promoting vegetation that is not suitable for the place?

VC: That's a valid concern. But it is not specific to the green credits programme. India has always promoted plantations and it has unfortunately promoted monocultures in several places. It is possible that the green credit programme could have similar fallouts and you have to be careful not to incentivise these monoculture plantations.

A eucalyptus plantation at near Chinnakkanal in Idukki. THE HINDU

As Debadityo said, this is an incentive scheme in a market-based formulation. For example, the government could also incentivise planters by paying, say, ₹100 per tree. You get capital subsidies for solar plants. Being a market-based incentive approach, there has to be a demand and supply side. In carbon markets, the commodity is carbon crates. Here, it is green credits.

But plantations and monocultures were also driven by incentives. Can you regenerate a forest ecosystem in a market mechanism without compromising on biodiversity?

DS: There are two aspects to it: the land where you're going to have plantations and how you're going to do the plantations. The guidelines require States to identify degraded forests within their jurisdiction. Now, a forest is not just trees; there can be open patches within it. We have more than 200 types of forests. The forests of the Central Indian landscape, the whole Deccan Peninsula, and Leh-Ladakh are not dominated by trees. There are bushes and many other things. What happens when plantations come up in these areas? There's a huge incentive now; it's not small like the Compensatory Afforestation schemes. Wherever these schemes have promoted plantations, we have seen disaster. We have seen forest departments promoting plantations by clearing existing vegetation, uprooting local trees, planting big ones using JCBs and tractors. Such approaches can impact local biodiversity, soil health... For regeneration, you don't have to do any major intervention, you have to just protect the area from disturbances. And in 10-15 years, we can have a good natural forest supporting biodiversity and benefiting local communities.

Let's say a 1,000 trees are planted. After two years, an independent body will do a verification. And let's say growing 1,000 trees in a particular patch earns you one green credit per tree. Now, the interesting thing is, this could be connected to voluntary carbon markets. In your experience in market-based mechanisms, we are familiar with carbon offsets as they are measurable quantities. Can you actually devise a logical trading system around such a philosophy of green credit and carbon?

> This programme ends up bypassing the whole forest clearance process just to help the industries get green credits
> **DEBADITYO SINHA**

VC: It is important to look at the larger picture. The larger picture is we want to incentivise biodiversity conservation of endemic forests, promote local species, etc. There will always be measurement problems. Like, how do you measure the biodiversity impact of two trees that are, say, 200 meters apart? Of course, it is going to be very confusing, and that science is evolving. But let us take it that we will never be able to resolve that perfect scientific measure and that is where social science comes in. The social science part is, do we have a reasonable measurement? An imperfect but reasonable measurement only means that a larger set of stakeholders, civil society, and the media are okay with that approach. I think the trap that we often fall into is trying to get to the perfect measure. Ideally, the government should have a lot of money and there should be no need for a market mechanism; the government can already give money for these kinds of programmes. We know there is a fiscal constraint in a developing economy. So, these kinds of instruments where you are leveraging money from especially the private sector are good.

Let's say you're growing some forests for sequestering carbon. I can understand that. But let's say in a desert or some other ecosystem trees don't work and you need shrubs, for instance. Now, you can set a goal of reviving the ecosystem of this place. Can you say how many units of ecosystem revival is equal to the units of carbon that are captured? And extend that to groundwater recharge and air pollution? Do you think all these criteria are commensurable?

VC: That's the biggest challenge with this market – fungibility. Let's say in the carbon market, there are many different kinds of projects. There is a solar project, there is a cookstove project, there is a forestation project. Ultimately, whatever they do, they save one unit of carbon and it can be measured. In green credits, one is a biodiversity credit, one is a water conservation credit. How do you, on the same platform, equate a credit of one unit of water conservation with one unit of ecosystem restoration? So yes, fungibility is not there and that is a challenge. The whole idea behind markets is that there are many suppliers and then many people demand the same commodity. That's how you have something that is close to a perfect market. Here, what you will end up having is five projects, which are about water conservation. And then on the demand side also five people who are interested in water conservation. So, they will be backing this trade. So the market will still function. But they are definitely not fungible commodities.

DS: One important aspect is how green credits will influence mandatory compliances. For example, in the case of forest clearances, the guidelines say the green credits earned from these conditions can be used while applying for forest clearances. And again, the problem is, can you separate forest, water, biodiversity, and livelihood? Can you make them uniform? Every place is different, unique. So, there is a problem. And I think this is going with the assumption that we are not going to compromise on our industrial growth, economic growth, that is something which is primary. All these things are taken care of, and industry should not be threatened that such a law is there. So basically, it is more of ease of doing business.

Just to build on that, the way this is structured, do you think it clashes with any of our other environmental laws?

DS: Definitely. At least in this guideline, I can see clearly the clashes with the Forest Conservation Act. First there's no definition of forest, and no definition of degraded forest. So, we end up wrongly categorising open natural ecosystems also as forest. Second, this programme ends up bypassing the whole forest clearance process just to help the industries get green credits. While applying (for forest clearance) they will say, "I have already green credit, you give me the clearance quickly." Normally. you have stage one, stage two - a step by step process – and this is a longer process but ideal. This is because when things are so complicated, we have to take a very nuanced approach and you have to follow all the principles of environmental law, which anyway is compromised in our country. So we should take the steps to strengthen it.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

The challenges of reporting on climate change

Climate change is a complex collection of phenomena with many moving parts

Vasudevan Mukunth

Many people ask if climate change is a poll issue in India. The first phase of the Lok Sabha polls started and ended on April 19; the second phase is on today. More than a few have expressed doubts that climate change is dictating voters' choices.

Journalists want to improve awareness of climate change. It is clear to us that both the policy and the behavioural changes required for people to adapt to its effects in future must begin right away, and that these changes need the government's support. My labours as a journalist often come down to persuading someone somewhere to change their mind. This is a laborious task with a high failure rate, and I day-dream how easy some parts of climate journalism would be if people at large woke up one day and voted along climate lines.

Climate change is a complex collection of phenomena with many moving parts. Having its fullest measure means taking a broad view of events evolving across space and time. Then again, news journalists are tracking this evolution and its effects on the world around us in relatively small increments: one place, one day. This is like trying to understand everything about a carrot by slicing it into really thin slivers and examining them one at a time. But between the demands of the rituals of journalism (reporting, editing, etc.) and the messy shapes climate change takes on the ground, it is impossible to capture all stories all the time. Climate change alters people's access to water, clean air, land, nutrients, etc., while also interacting with gender, caste, class, and geographic overtones in ways that distort its appearance beyond recognition. We often miss many stories and play catch up. In this chaos, it's easy to lose sight of climate change the actor.

For example, there was an uptick in child trafficking in the Sundarbans delta region last decade, suggesting perhaps that some sort of organised racket had taken root in the area. But a journalist's investigation revealed the primordial cause to be a combination of climate change and subpar state intervention. In 2020 and 2021, the Cyclones Amphan and Yaas – rendered more ferocious by climate change – deepened the destitution wrought earlier in parts of the delta by Cyclone Alia in 2009. However, the state had focused on large infrastructure projects to improve locals' prospects over setting up reliable sources of income, big or small. So after each cyclone, self-sufficient communities became less so, and had to deal with this forced transition.

Our determination of whether climate change figures highly on voters' minds influences voters, politicians, scientists, and, importantly, our own sense of whether we're doing a good job. But we are also liable to overlook the lived experiences wrought in some measure by climate change and thus underestimate the length of its shadow at the ballot.

A man from the Sundarbans may be more impressed by a candidate offering low-paying but predictable jobs over one who has secured funds to build an embankment along a river. Or a woman in a village may favour a candidate who intends to build toilets inside homes over one promising extra beds at the hospital. This is because she would like to drink more water to cope with the rising heat and not have to venture to use toilets outdoors in the daytime, suffering harassment from local men.

Our understanding of such choices will be incomplete without accounting for climate change. Of course, it's nearly impossible to blame climate change for anomalous weather over a short period and/or a small area, but it's also true that climate change is imposing such anomalies over 'newer' areas and for longer durations – and making its presence felt in hard-to-predict ways. The best thing we can do is to keep the carrot in mind while counting the slivers.

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

The return of the king

D. Gukesh's family and fans welcome him at Chennai airport. The Grandmaster, aged 17, won the prestigious FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament 2024, scoring nine points out of 14 games. He is the youngest-ever player to win the tournament, which is held to select the challenger for the World Chess Championship. VELANKANNI RAJ B.

FROM THE ARCHIVES — The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 26, 1974

Army rebels claim seizure of power in Portugal

Lisbon, April 25: Armed forces protesting against Portugal's 13-year-old colonial wars and lack of democratic freedoms rose up to-day against the right-wing Government of Premier Marcello Caetano and claimed victory in a short, almost bloodless coup. A cheering crowd estimated at many thousands heard of the last act of the 14-hour uprising – the reported surrender of Mr. Caetano and members of his Government at the downtown Carmo Palace, serving as headquarters of the pro-Government Republican National Guards. "We inform the nation that ex-Premier Caetano and members of his Government have surrendered" rebel broadcasts said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 26, 1924

A mild disturber

Moscow, April 25: The All-Russian Council of Trade Unions has issued a protest against the British Bankers' memorandum of April 3rd, which declares that Russia cannot recognise the debts of the Tsarist and the Krensky Governments which will degrade Russians to the level of coolies. If England gives us credits we shall repay a moderate percentage, but private property will never be returned to foreign owners.

From Page One

EC sends notice to BJP for plaint against Modi

The Congress, which was the chief complainant against the Prime Minister's comments, said that the EC sending the notice to Mr. Nadda and not to the Prime Minister was a revealing move. "They [the EC] are super, super cautious when it comes to the Prime Minister, they are super cautious when it comes to the Home Minister," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh told reporters at party headquarters, adding that the Congress expects the Commission to act impartially and issue notices whenever there is need for one.

"There had been no complaint against (former Prime Ministers) P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Manmohan Singh. This is the second time we have complained against the PM. We had earlier complained about the Home Minister [Amit Shah], but no action was taken. Action was taken against the Assam Chief Minister," he added.

Notice to Kharge

The EC attached the complaints filed by the BJP to the notice sent to Mr. Kharge. They alleged that he and Mr. Gandhi had violated the MCC during a speech in Kottayam on April 18 by making "false allegations" against the PM, claiming that Mr. Modi had advocated for 'one nation, one language, and one religion'. The notice also said that Mr. Kharge, in comments made to a publication, had said that President Droupadi Murmu was not invited to the Ram Temple consecration ceremony because she is a member of a Scheduled Tribe.

This notice too did not name either of the individual leaders.

Since the beginning of this poll season, the Commission has issued showcause notices to Congress leader Supriya Shrinate, BJP MP from West Bengal Dilip Ghosh, Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi, Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala, and Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief K. Chandrashekar Rao. In all these cases, however, notices were directly addressed to each of the individuals against whom complaints were filed.

'Census delayed as govt. wants to end quota'

When *The Hindu* pointed out that the delay was on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Ramesh said,"In 2021, many countries of the world carried out census during COVID. How was India alone an exception to this? Why was it not carried out in 2022, in 2023, or being done in 2024?"

The Congress's charge came on a day when party president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and charged his advisors of misleading him about "things that are not written in our manifesto".

"I would be more than happy to meet you in person to explain our Nyay Patra so that as the Prime Minister you don't make statements that are false," Mr. Kharge said in his letter.

"You and your government have repeatedly turned away from the atrocities that the poor and backward women are facing in the country. Today, you talk about their *mangalsutra*. Isn't your government responsible for the atrocities against women in Manipur, atrocities against Dalit girls, garlanding of rapists?" asked the Congress chief, in a stinging rebuttal to Mr. Modi's charge that the Congress would take away wealth, including *mangalsutras*, from Hindu women and redistribute it among Muslims.

Mr. Ramesh also accused Mr. Modi of spreading "lies" to divert attention from real issues in the ongoing Lok Sabha election. He dared the Prime Minister to point out where in the party's manifesto the phrase "redistribution of wealth" had been mentioned.

Rejecting Mr. Modi's allegation that the Congress would charge inheritance tax from people if it came to power, he said, "Prime Minister symbolises *asatyamev jayate*."

Mr. Ramesh also asked the Prime Minister to clear his stand on the issue of conducting a caste census, and questioned why the government has not made public the entire dataset of the 2011 socio-economic caste census (SECC).

Mr. Ramesh claimed that after reading the trends from the first phase of the Lok Sabha election, Mr. Modi has raised communal issues as he wants the Congress on a different pitch. "The Prime Minister wants us to play on the pitch that has been prepared by Jay Shah and Amit Shah. We will not play on that pitch, we will play on the pitch that has issues of unemployment, inflation, increasing economic inequalities," he said.

Phase 2 of polls today; 1,202 candidates in fray

Also, over 14.78 lakh voters above 85 years of age, 42,226 voters above 100 years, and 14.7 lakh persons with disability have been provided the option to vote from the comfort of their homes.

Voting in Betul of Madhya Pradesh, which was also scheduled to be held on Friday, was shifted to the third phase on May 7 following the death of Bahujan Samaj Party candidate Ashok Balawi.

Some of the prominent leaders in the fray include Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Shashi Tharoor, Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar of the BJP, and actor-turned-politicians Hema Malini and Arun Govil.

After the second phase, voting will be over in Kerala, Rajasthan and Tripura.

SC declines petition to end Collegium, revive NJAC

The plea, filed by advocate Mathews Nedumpara, says the present system leads to nepotism; SC Registrar says the issue is settled, and repeat litigation is a 'waste of judicial time and energy'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

> It is critical to ensure litigants do not overburden courts with matters which already stand adjudicated
>
> **PUNEET SEHGAL**
> Supreme Court Registrar

The Supreme Court Registry has refused to accept a petition to end the Collegium system of judicial appointments and revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), seeking to "prevent needless waste of judicial time and energy".

In a six-page order, Supreme Court Registrar Puneet Sehgal said that the Collegium system had already been upheld, while the NJAC – which gave an equal role to the government in judicial appointments – had been struck down by a Constitution Bench in October 2015.

A review plea against the judgment was also subsequently dismissed by the court in 2018.

The petition filed by advocate Mathews Nedumpara only "replicated" issues which have already been put to rest, Mr. Sehgal said. "It is critical to ensure litigants do not overburden courts with matters which already stand adjudicated," he observed in the order dated April 24.

Ulterior motive

A repeat litigation was not in the public's best interest, the order said, adding that the petition by Mr. Nedumpara was either an attempt to overreach the principles of settled law or fuelled by an "ulterior motive".

The Registrar invoked the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 in his order against the petition.

"I hold that the registration of the present case was not proper and by virtue of Order XV Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, I hereby decline to receive the same," the order declared.

Under this provision of the 2013 Rules, the Registrar may refuse to receive a petition on the ground that it discloses no reasonable cause or is frivolous or contains scandalous matter. The petitioner has 15 days to appeal to the court.

'Synonym for nepotism'

The petition was filed in 2023 amid verbal attacks against the Collegium system by the then Law Minister Kiren Rijiju.

The plea argues that the Supreme Court, through its Constitution Bench judgment of October 2015, had thwarted the "will of the people" by striking down the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act which had introduced the NJAC mechanism.

The petition says that the 2015 judgment should be rendered void *ab initio* as it had revived the Collegium system, which the petitioners called a "synonym for nepotism and favouritism".

'Arrest of criminal politicians does not affect free elections'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Faced with accusations about the intent and timing of its arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal ahead of the Lok Sabha election, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) told the Supreme Court on Thursday that arresting politicians who are "criminals" is not a blow to free and fair elections.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the rest of the Opposition have accused the investigative agency of being a "political wing of the [ruling] BJP".

The AAP said that the real intention behind the arrest of Mr. Kejriwal on March 21 was to prevent him from campaigning for the Lok Sabha election.

Politicians who are criminals cannot enjoy immunity from arrest merely because they are required to campaign in the election, the ED said in an 87-page affidavit.

"Treating a politician differently from an ordinary criminal in a matter of arrest would amount to arbitrary and irrational exercise of power of arrest which would violate the principle of equality enshrined under Article 14 of the Constitution," the ED reasoned.

The Central agency said that the arrest of Mr. Kejriwal was based on material evidence which indicated that the Chief Minister was guilty of money laundering.

The ED said that Mr. Kejriwal had avoided the investigation, disobeyed nine summons, and was totally non-cooperative. He either did not cooperate or had given evasive answers to simple, non-incriminating questions during his interrogation on the day of the search, leading to his arrest, it mentioned.

Modi thanks Italian PM for invitation to G-7 meeting in June

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke on Thursday to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, thanking her for an invitation to the G-7 meeting in June, if he is re-elected. The invitation for India to be a special invitee at the G-7 summit's outreach sessions, due to be held June 13-15, was received earlier this week, sources said.

Among the invitations New Delhi has received straight after election results are out in June are those for the Prime Minister or External Affairs Minister to attend the Ukraine peace conference to be held on June 15-16 in Lucerne, Switzerland, as well as for the External Affairs Minister to travel to the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod for the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting on June 10-11. However, both the Ministry of External Affairs and diplomatic sources said a final response on all three invitations could only be expected after the results are announced.

"PM [Modi] extended his greetings to PM Meloni and the people of Italy on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of Liberation Day," a release by the PM's Office said. "[PM Modi] thanked PM Meloni for the invite to the G-7 summit outreach sessions to be held in June 2024 in Puglia, Italy," it added.

CBI registers first FIR in Sandeshkhali violence case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The CBI had created a dedicated email ID for the public to send complaints against people allegedly involved in the crimes. PTI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered the first First Information Report (FIR) against five "influential" persons and unknown others in connection with the allegation of sexual harassment and land grabbing in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali, said an agency official on Thursday.

On April 11, the CBI created a dedicated email ID (sandeshkhali@cbi.gov.in) for the public to send complaints against people allegedly involved in crimes against women and land grabbing in the Sandeshkhali region.

The District Magistrate (North 24 Parganas), in an order dated April 10, had also been requested that the email ID be publicised in the locality and a public notice be issued in the vernacular dailies having wide circulation in the area.

The High Court had ordered a court-monitored CBI investigation into allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali, saying an "impartial inquiry" was required in the interest of justice and fair play. The agency has also been asked to submit a detailed report on the next date of hearing on May 2.

No case filed against man for terming Zubair a jihadi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The police have informed the Delhi High Court that they have not registered any case against one Jagdish Singh who referred to Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair as 'jihadi' in a post on X in 2020.

In their status report, the Delhi Police said the post by Mr. Singh did not "cause fear or alarm" in the public or induce any person to commit an offence against any state or against public tranquillity.

The report came on Mr. Zubair's 2020 plea seeking to quash an FIR registered against him in Delhi.

The next hearing is on August 5.

Centre allows export of 2,000 tonnes of onions

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The relaxation is for white onions, primarily grown in Gujarat that goes to the polls on May 7

In a surprise move, the Union government on Thursday partially relaxed the indefinite ban on onion exports again, paving the way for the "immediate" export of 2,000 tonnes of white onions, primarily grown in Gujarat, from three designated ports.

A notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said that exports of white onions would be permitted only after Gujarat's Horticulture Commissioner certifies the item and quantity being exported.

While previous relaxations to the ban specified the countries where shipments could go and mandated that such exports be channelled through the National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the latest notification sets no such conditions. It only stipulates that the exports must be routed through the Gujarati ports of Mundra and Pipavav, or Nhava Sheva in Mumbai.

Incidentally, horticulture exporters are learnt to have written to the Commerce Ministry and the DGFT on April 13 to ascertain if any relaxation is in the offing for white onion exports, citing reports of ongoing procurement of export quality white onions at one of Gujarat's Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs).

Gujarat is the predominant producer and exporter of white onions in the country, with districts like Bhavnagar and Amreli – which go to the polls on May 7 – accounting for a large part of the produce.

The latest relaxation has triggered some disquiet among onion farmers from neighbouring States such as Maharashtra who grow red onions. "Don't farmers outside Gujarat also deserve export opportunities now that [domestic] wholesale prices for red onions have cooled," asked a farmers' representative from Nashik.

Ajit Shah, president of the Horticulture Produce Exporters' Association or HPEA, said that the order is a step forward and suggested that the same relaxations must be offered for red onions as well.

ABC journalist left India in spite of visa approval: officials

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Avani Dias

Australian authorities on Thursday acknowledged that India had granted visa to Avani Dias, chief of bureau of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), though she had "chosen" to leave India by that time. They expressed satisfaction at the handling of the case by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Ms. Dias claimed last week that she had to leave India "abruptly" as she was told that her "visa extension would be denied".

"The Australian government has been working with the Indian government and the ABC and Australia appreciates the MEA's assistance and cooperation. Australia is pleased that the Indian government granted a visa for the journalist though by that time she had chosen to leave India. ABC coverage of India, particularly during the election period, is important to Australians and the Australian government," a source from the Australian High Commission here said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

The Australian version was corroborated by Indian sources, who said that Ms. Dias was told nearly two weeks before she left India that her visa application was being processed and that the document would be delivered to her. They said that Ms. Dias did receive the visa but decided to leave.

She had said that the Indian authorities were upset over her reporting on pro-Khalistan activists in Punjab and that she was told that her reporting had "crossed a line".

It is understood that the Indian side was surprised at the accusations by Ms. Dias. The Indian sources added that following the grant of visa, her requirements for covering the Indian election was also being looked into positively and that it could have been arranged despite previous disagreements over her coverage of Punjab.

SC verdict today on transparency of EVM system

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled on Friday to pronounce its judgment on petitions seeking a more transparent system of voting to ensure free and fair elections. The verdict coincides with the second phase of polling for the Lok Sabha election.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta had held marathon hearings of petitions filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Arun Kumar Agarwal saying that the electronic voting machine (EVM) system was opaque and prone to rigging. They had highlighted the fundamental right of voters to confirm that their votes have been accurately recorded.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, for the ADR, had suggested measures such as giving electors a copy of the VVPAT slips so that they could verify their accuracy before they are put in sealed ballot boxes.

APPEAL

Miss Singam Syamala Bhanu, daughter of Singam Veer Raju 5 years admitted in Christian Medical College, Ranipet is suffering from Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis Syndrome (HLH). This is an extremely rare disorder of the immune system. The best option for her would be to undergo allogeneic peripheral blood stem cell transplant (PBSCT). The estimated cost of mud transplant in this hospital is approximately **Rs. 35,00,000/-**.

Please send donation however small and save the girl. Cheque/D.D/M.O. favouring **Save Poor Lives** A/c Singam Syamala Bhanu. **Our Account Details:** S/B Account No. 20000913487. State Bank of India, R.A. Puram and IFSC CODE: SBIN0001855, you can donate through Google Pay No. **9884607377**, UPI ID: **savepoorlives@oksbi**. All donations are exempted under 80G of I.T. ACT.

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ELECTIONS 2024

YouTuber held in T.N. fake news case joins BJP

Bihar YouTuber Tripurari Kumar Tiwari, alias Manish Kashyap, who was arrested last year for allegedly circulating fake news on Bihari migrants being attacked in Tamil Nadu, joined the BJP on Thursday in the presence of party MP Manoj Tiwari in Delhi.

Mr. Kashyap was in the eye of a storm last year after his videos allegedly claimed that migrants were being targeted in Tamil Nadu and created panic among the community.

Mr. Kashyap had earlier announced to contest the Lok Sabha election from West Champaran as an Independent candidate, pitting him against sitting MP and BJP candidate from the seat, Sanjay Jaiswal.

His induction into the party ensures he is out of fray from the seat.

Manish Kashyap with BJP chief J.P. Nadda after joining the party. X/@OFFICEOFJPNADDA

NCP(SP) releases manifesto, backs caste census

The Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) on Thursday released its manifesto, favouring caste census while promising a panel for farmers welfare, right to apprenticeship, 50% job reservation for women and scrapping of the Agnipath scheme.

The manifesto of the NCP (SP), a constituent of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi supported full Statehood for J&K, and opposed the idea of 'one nation, one election'.

NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil, who unveiled the manifesto in the presence of party chief Sharad Pawar, said the NCP (SP) would demand a Constitutional amendment to raise the 50% cap on reservations. He said the party endorsed the five guarantees given by the Congress in the latter's manifesto.

"EC has to be independent. The judiciary has to be made independent as it is the place where people get justice if they don't get justice anywhere else

FAROOQ ABDULLAH
National Conference president

Akhilesh Yadav files nomination from Kannauj

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday filed his nomination from the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat.

Mr. Yadav, who had won the Kannauj seat first in 2000 and later represented it in 2004 and 2009, assured voters that he would complete unfinished projects.

"It is obvious that BJP is rattled by Congress' manifesto. It has left an impression in minds of people, especially the poor and middle class

P. CHIDAMBARAM
Congress leader

Under discussion: The Congress general secretary says a proposal to field Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is very much on the cards. FILE PHOTO

Decision on Rae Bareli, Amethi seats soon: Avinash

A.M. Jigeesh
SHAHJAHANPUR

Congress workers of Amethi and Rae Bareli are pleading before the party leadership with "folded hands" that senior leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra must be asked to contest from the two seats, Avinash Pandey, the party's general secretary and Uttar Pradesh in-charge, said on Thursday.

Mr. Pandey said the leadership already had serious discussions on the proposal and the next meeting of the Central Election Committee, headed by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, will take a final decision on the matter.

Mr. Pandey was talking to *The Hindu* after a convention of Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) workers in Shajahanpur recently. When asked about the candidates for the pocket boroughs of the Gandhi family and the demand that siblings must contest the two seats, he said: "It is very much on the cards. Serious discussions have already been taken place [within the party]. In the next meeting of the Central Election Committee [CEC], a decision will be taken. There is a unanimous demand with folded hands by the Congress workers and people from Rae Bareli, Amethi and other parts of Uttar Pradesh that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi must contest. But the CEC, ultimately, will take the decision. Whatever decision is taken by the CEC, it will be in the interest of the party," Mr. Pandey said. Expressing confidence that the alliance will emerge victorious in the politically crucial State, he said the issue of insecurity among the common people, and questions about the misuse of the constitutional offices for weakening the Opposition parties are the main issues being discussed by the people. "They are feeling threatened that the democracy of this country is going to be finished," he said.

He said the Congress had compromised its interests for the larger interest of the alliance and decided to contest 17 seats.

CARTOONSCAPE | SOUMYADIP SINHA

'We will never feel the need to change Basic Structure of the Constitution'

No question of ending reservation, says the Defence Minister; he adds that simultaneous polls will surely happen, while more persuasion is needed for a Uniform Civil Code; he alleges that the dip in voter turnout during the first phase of Lok Sabha polls was due to INDIA supporters staying away

INTERVIEW

Rajnath Singh

Nistula Hebbar

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has been travelling non-stop as he campaigns for BJP candidates in the Lok Sabha election. He speaks on Uniform Civil Code (UCC), voter turnout and the Opposition's claims on investigative agencies being used to harass them. Excerpts:

The voter turnout in the first phase has slipped and is said to be a cause of worry for the BJP.

It's not an issue of concern for us, because we believe that a majority of those who want the current government to continue turned out to vote. Those who felt that the INDI Alliance is not in a position to form a government, they possibly felt that it was of no use to vote.

There is talk that this may reflect complacency among BJP supporters on the return of a BJP government.

Some may think that, but it is our duty to reach out to everyone as participants in the democratic process, to inform people of our achievements till now and at the same time, create a political awareness among people about the democratic exercise. I have always believed that when we campaign, we should also work towards creating a political awareness about democracy among people, so that they too can analyse as to which political party is best suited to govern the country.

In your party's manifesto, for which you headed the committee, a UCC, and One Nation, One Election (ONOE) have emerged as new ideological projects.

I have spoken of ONOE in many campaign stops during these polls itself. I received a tremendous response from the people, so this is definitely going to happen. As far as UCC is concerned, those who have any misconceptions against it, we will try and persuade them. All progressive countries, in my view, have and should work towards a UCC.

But a Parliamentary Standing Committee headed by the BJP's Sushil Modi is of the view that tribal communities should be exempt from the UCC.

Yes. Tribal communities should be exempt and they will be.

How is it a "uniform" code then, with exemptions?

There are some tribals who are particularly vulnerable, where governments have not been able to reach in the way that they have other communities. Their cultural and social interests have to be especially taken care of. Also, there are no blocks to people observing their culture and traditions, and religious customary rituals.

Many marginal communities seem to be apprehensive of a change in the Constitution and reservations, especially after BJP leaders said that the party needed 400 seats to effect it.

There is no question of ending reservations. I firmly believe that we need reservations. I also firmly hold that we will never feel the need to change the Basic Structure of the Constitution. If, on certain matters, there is a feeling in the country that certain issues need to be addressed, then that can be done. Amendments to the Constitution have been done under Congress governments in the past, while BJP governments have been more circumspect and done amendments only to strengthen the integrity of institutions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks in Rajasthan have been described as "hate speech" by the Opposition. What is your view?

There should not be any discrimination on the basis of any religion. Our Constitution also does not allow it. But you must have seen in the past that the Supreme Court had quashed reservation based on religion proposed by the erstwhile government of united Andhra Pradesh. One should not go against the *mansha* (intention) of the Constitution. These people [the Congress] were the ones who brought in the Ranganath Misra Commission, the Sachar Committee reports, etc, there were recommendations that within the 27% reservations for OBCs, 8% were to be given to minorities, with 6% for Muslims. This is when certain Muslim backward castes are already included in the list of OBCs and getting reservations.

As Defence Minister, what has been your most challenging issue, and the most rewarding?

If there is a clash or a war-like situation, it is challenging, but our forces responded very well.

As far as our aims are concerned, I was particularly concerned with the indigenisation of our defence items, in which we have moved forward, although there is much more to do.

But the India-China border issue remains unresolved.

Look, talks are still ongoing, and constructively, and there is no fresh tension that has come up.

There has been discontent expressed about the Agnipath scheme in States such as Uttarakhand and among the youth.

There is no real reason for any apprehensions over this scheme. It is the Opposition that is creating this talk and fear. If at the age of 18, a young boy joins under the Agnipath-Agniveer scheme and leaves with an intermediate certificate and that of being well skilled, there are many institutions where there is provision for reservation in jobs for them. At the time of getting out of this programme, at the young age of 22 to 23, they will leave with around ₹15 lakh, and if they want to go into the forces, there are paramilitary forces which they can join, as have big industrial houses.

The Opposition alleges that the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation are being used to harass its leaders and forcing them to join the BJP.

The BJP does not do that; it's the agencies who investigate cases, and if they don't trust agencies, they have the courts, which, I might add, have not given relief on these cases.

There is apprehension being expressed by old-timers in the BJP that too many outsiders are being taken in and rewarded, changing the basic character of the party.

There is no such thing. Every party wants to expand and increase its strength, and I believe this is why the BJP is the largest political party in the world.

EC in a fix over deploying dismissed employees for poll duty in Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Election Commission (EC) is in a fix over the deployment of nearly thousands of teaching and non-teaching staff in poll-related duties whose services have recently been terminated by the Calcutta High Court.

Sources in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal say that about 40% of the 25,000 teaching and non-teaching staff whose services have been terminated were requisitioned for poll duty. The challenge before the commission is to replace nearly 10,000 such employees from active poll duty. The commission has asked the District Magistrate to prepare a list

High Court's order

The court on Monday directed the termination of appointments of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff in West Bengal government-sponsored and aided schools who were appointed through the State-level Selection Test (SLST) in 2016.

In limbo: Teachers and other staff whose jobs were terminated on HC orders writing petitions to the Supreme Court. DEBASISH BHADURI

The State government has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Calcutta High Court order against termination of these employees. The second phase of the Lok Sabha election in three key constituencies of Darjeeling, Raiganj and Balurghat will be held on Friday and polling personnel have arrived in several booths. Of the polling booths in the second phase, 98% have been marked vulnerable by the commission.

The Calcutta High Court has directed that the employees whose services have been terminated return their entire salary with 12% interest. The Opposition parties in West Bengal have raised questions over assigning poll-related duties to employees whose jobs have been terminated.

The West Bengal government on Wednesday challenged the order of the Division Bench of the High Court before the Supreme Court. The State government is likely to raise the issue of deployment of terminated employees deployed in the Lok Sabha poll before the Supreme Court to seek a stay on the Calcutta High Court order.

Sources in the government say that it is difficult to replace thousands of such employees from election duty at the last moment. Elections to 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal are being held across seven phases.

Congress trying to pry into women's lockers, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday targeted the INDIA bloc and the Congress in particular for allegedly trying to scrutinise the cupboards and lockers of "sisters and mothers". He said the election manifesto of the Congress bore the imprint of the Muslim League, with a unidirectional focus on bolstering their electoral base.

At an election rally in Agra, Mr. Modi said, "Congress party Shehzada's X-ray machine seeks to scrutinise the lockers of my mothers and sisters, why should this be allowed?"

He accused the Opposition parties of aiming to systematically plunder and loot people's *virasat* (ancestral property). "These people are aiming to take away 55% of that property, leaving only 45% with you. Will you allow this to happen?" he asked the gathering.

Mr. Modi also accused the Congress of hatching a conspiracy aimed at bringing religion-based reservation while denying Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class communities their due.

The PM added that while he is working hard to fulfil the dream of social justice envisaged by Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the Opposition governments did nothing for these social groups.

"Since Independence, Congress governments only cheated voters of OBC, SC and ST communities in the name of social justice. It is the BJP and Modi who are working day and night to fulfil the ideas of Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule," said Mr. Modi.

INBRIEF

Six killed in fire at Patna hotel; 45 rescued from the building

Six people, three of them women, were killed and 19 injured in a fire at a hotel in Patna on Thursday. Forty-five people were rescued from the burning Pal Hotel located in the Kotwali police station area. The injured were admitted to the Patna Medical College and Hospital, where the condition of two is said to be critical. The police are trying to ascertain the identity of the deceased. "Gas cylinder catching fire is said to be the reason for the incident. However, investigation is under way to ascertain the cause of the fire," Chandra Prakash, Superintendent of Police (Patna Central), said. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed deep grief over the incident.

2 Naxalites killed in gunfight with security forces in Odisha

Two Naxalites were found dead following an exchange of fire between the outlawed CPI (Maoist) and the security forces in Parhel Reserve Forest under Kantamal police station of Odisha's Boudh district early on Thursday. According to the police, the Naxalites launched indiscriminate fire on personnel of Special Operation Group, a special anti-naxal force of Odisha, when they were on patrolling the area upon being tipped off about the presence of Naxals. "As of now, we have spotted two bodies. Massive combing operation has been launched," said Suresh Dev Datta Singh, Additional Director-General of Police (Operation). Grenades and other articles were recovered from the area, he said. Odisha has recorded 154 incidences of Naxal violence between 2019 and 2023.

After missing CAA cut-off, many Pakistani Hindus in Rajasthan stare at a bleak future

Around 75% of citizenship applications in the State have been pending since 2019, says an activist working for their welfare; besides that, basic facilities such as proper roads, sewerage lines, and clean drinking water too are a distant dream for them while also facing social stigma

Ishita Mishra
BARMER

Amid the euphoria around the Citizenship (Amendment) Act during the Lok Sabha election, those who came to India after December 31, 2014, the cut-off date under the new law, face a difficult path to citizenship. They have to apply under the primary Citizenship Act, 1955, which has in the past made applicants wait for years.

The Pakistani Hindu families that have migrated to Barmer – bordering Pakistan – years ago feel that the CAA is of no use until their living conditions are uplifted. Many of them, even after becoming Indian citizens, continue to live in poor conditions and face social stigma.

Hare Singh Lodha, 55, came to India with nine family members from Pakistan's Sindh in 2017. He is living in a rented accommodation in Barmer's Daan Ji Ki Hodi locality, where over 800 Pakistani Hindu families live. Mr. Lodha cannot apply under the CAA and he does not want to go back to Pakistan where his life is in "danger". But even living in India did not turn out to be "as expected", he says.

"My family came to India with just four suitcases. We couldn't carry much cash and gold owing to Customs issues. I took a loan from my relative and started a confectionery shop in which my daily earnings are ₹1,000-1,200. With an annual income of ₹4 lakh, with which I have to run a family and send children to school, I also have to save over ₹1.2 lakh to get the visa renewal of my family which is ₹7,000 per head," Mr. Lodha says. He spends ₹40,000-50,000 on travelling to Delhi from Barmer, with nine other family members, for visa renewal formality.

Under the Citizenship Act, 1955, Mr. Lodha will be eligible for citizenship after 12 years of his stay in India as his parents were not born in undivided India.

Negative report

"But the challenge will not end here," says Jaswant Singh, another Pakistani Hindu, who moved to Barmer from Pakistan in early 2015 and is eligible to apply for citizenship after seven years of his stay here. He initially stayed at his brother's place in Barmer but after a few months moved into a rented house a little far away.

Seeking solace: The families that migrated to Barmer — bordering Pakistan — years ago feel that the CAA is of no use. FILE PHOTO

"I had applied for citizenship under the 1955 Act, but when the police came for verification for my credentials at my brother's place, they didn't wait for 10 minutes for my brother to call me, and left. I got to know that a negative report was filed for my citizenship application," he says, adding that he has no idea how long it will take for him to get citizenship.

Mr. Singh's 20-year-old son had completed his school from India and even managed to crack the medical entrance exam but he could not secure admission in a government medical college as he had no domicile certificate and local identity proof.

"They asked me to get my son admitted under foreign student category but it had two issues. First was that the fee was many times higher and second is that if we admit him under foreign student category, he will have to go back after studies but we want to stay in India," he points out.

For several Pakistani Hindu families living in Daan Ji Ki Hodi, apart from citizenship, basic facilities such as proper roads, sewerage lines, and clean drinking water too are a distant dream.

"You visited this colony where we are living. Have you seen any street lights? We don't have a sewage system in this side of the town. Most of us, the Pakistani Hindus, do menial jobs in India to survive. Its not just that our present is bad but we don't have much hopes of a future too. For how long will I work for my son or grandson to become at least a middle-class citizen of India," says Darbar Singh, who came to India in 2017.

Teething issues

Ram Singh Lodha, who came to India in 2006, secured Indian citizenship under the CAA but is waiting for the same for his mother who migrated here in 2019.

"Why can't they relax some rules for people whose family members are already Indians," he asks the government.

The claims made by successive governments at the Centre for uplifting persecuted communities are more in words and not in action, says Hindu Singh Sodha, president of Seemant Lok Sangathan (SLS), an organisation working for the welfare of families of Hindu migrants displaced from Pakistan.

"There are 35,000 non-resident Indians – mostly Pakistani Hindus – living in Rajasthan's Barmer, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jalore, and Jaipur. Around 75% of citizenship applications here are pending since 2019. In most cases, these Hindus live in ghettos or for those who can afford, in rented accommodations. No government has provided any land to them apart from the development of 'Vinoba Bhave Nagar' in Jodhpur, but the reserve price is so high that very few can afford to purchase them," he says.

Criticising the visa renewal procedure of the Union Home Ministry, Mr. Sodha said the Indian government was not even realising that a family that was already struggling to earn was giving so much to Pakistan in the form of passport renewal and renunciation of Pakistani citizenship fees.

Integrated policy

"The government must prepare an integrated policy for rehabilitation, employment, education and health care of such people," he said.

Junjar Singh Lodha, who got Indian citizenship long ago, has a wish from the government which is to restart the Thar Express – an international passenger train that used to run between Jodhpur in Rajasthan and Karachi Cantonment of Karachi in the Pakistani province of Sindh, which was suspended in 2019.

New test for special learning disabilities in adults on anvil

Ashna Butani
Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Union government is expected to roll out a new test to diagnose specific learning disabilities (SLDs) in adults in India by the end of the year, government officials have said, adding that the test is being designed by the National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID) in Telangana's Secunderabad.

This comes even as the Supreme Court is in the middle of hearing a writ petition by a former Jawaharlal Nehru University student challenging the absence of such diagnostic methods for testing SLDs in adults, which prevented them from getting disability certificates.

Getting a certificate is imperative in order to claim benefits under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, which provides for reservation in government or higher education institutions receiving government aid (5%), and in government jobs (4%).

Left out in 2016

But when SLDs were introduced in the list of disabilities in 2016, it invariably left out people who were adults at the time because the nature of the disorder requires diagnosis at early age.

Senior officials in the Union Social Justice Ministry said that the new test is being developed by NIEPID and should be ready for a phased rollout by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by the end of the year after it has been run against global standards for validation.

While the top court was hearing the matter, the Ministry issued a notification on March 12 revising the guidelines for assessing the extent of the specified disabilities.

The certification requirements for SLDs included a clinical assessment, an IQ assessment and an SLD assessment. The SLD assessment can be done using the NIMHANS battery test or the Grade Level of Assessment Devices (GLAD). This certification begins at the age of 8, followed by repeat certifications – once in Class 10, and then in Class 12.

The certificate issued after the final assessment at the age of 18 or above will be valid for lifetime.

CJI unhappy over some HCs hesitating about online links

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Thursday revealed that some High Courts still considered video conference hearings an indulgence and not a step forward by modern judiciary to provide access to justice for all.

"Some High Courts want an advance notice of 48 hours for providing video conferencing links [to lawyers and litigants]. Some have said you can get a VC link only if you are above the age of 60... The links should be in the cause list. Why should anyone be made to apply two days in advance or be above the age of 60 for video conferencing links?" Chief Justice Chandrachud said in open court at the beginning of a nine-judge Constitution Bench hearing.

The Chief Justice said ₹850 crore was spent between November 2023 and March 31, 2024 for creating infrastructure for the High Courts and the district court judiciary.

"High Courts spent 94% of that amount. Hopefully, now the infrastructure in the High Courts would really be upgraded," the CJI said.

He said the money was part of the ₹7,000 crore allocated to the judiciary for the third phase of its e-courts project.

The CJI said virtual hearings and video conferencing (VC) would help solve chronic delays plaguing criminal trials.

Do resources of individuals belong to community, asks SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Union government whether all material resources created by individual human labour constitute the resources of the community.

The Bench is hearing a reference on the contours of Article 39(b) of the Constitution, including whether privately-owned resources could be considered as "material resources of the community". The Article provided that the state should direct policy in such a way that the ownership and control of material resources of the community were distributed to best subserve the common good.

Attorney General (AG) R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Union of India, submitted that "all things in the material world which are available and made available by human interaction or engagement constitute the material resources of the community".

"Once resources are in the hands of the state, no further questions about ownership and control issues will make sense," the AG said.

This prompted Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading the Constitution Bench, to ask the AG if he was suggesting that "everything created by the application of private labour was the material resource of the community".

"So I build a house using my own income, is it the material resource of the community? I own a car, is it the material resource of the community? Is there no concept of private property," Chief Justice Chandrachud queried.

Mr. Venkataramani responded that "if it goes beyond the boundary of private consumption, there is an element of the community having a call on the resource".

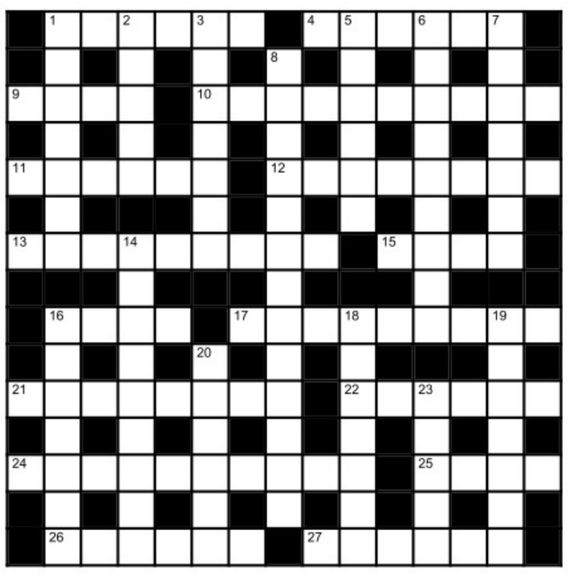
Justice Hrishikesh Roy, on the Bench, reacted by observing that it was difficult to imagine that whatever human resource produced was the resource of the community.

TH CROSSWORD + 14159

(set by Hypatia)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Instructions to cook crepe mixed with *maida* essentially (6)
4 Group looked around ruins (6)
9 Grows older when leaves shed softly (4)
10 Spoke about old city next to river that's enclosed (10)
11 Secret cabinet (6)
12 Fine returning to fetch an old gran's knitted jumper (8)
13 Expert setter's books become famous (9)
15 Basically bachelors aren't immune to temptation (4)
16 Browse online - it's mostly safe and fine (4)
17 Understand one's lost in vehicles behind schedule (9)
21 Secure initially high sum on return - it can grow fast (8)
22 Value Eskimo men trimming traps (6)
24 Crowds welcoming hot and ultimately chic royals (10)
25 Time's endless for nobody (4)
26 Say, is IT team not even providing network (6)
27 Kind offer (6)

Down

1 Right attack left and argue as usual (7)
2 Expenses rising in most societies (5)
3 Afghan president has bad time with global body (7)
5 For starters, all male orangutans use nimble toes supply (6)
6 Essentially customer loan via mobile that's useless (2,2,5)
7 That woman had to keep a nanny (3-4)
8 Breach of trust by reps, IMO (6,7)
14 Traders gathered orders finally around busy ranch (9)
16 Queen wearing Indian drapes spurns English suits (7)
18 Like teacher initially checking label for greeting (7)
19 Spooner's fully cooked dal, say in clay oven (7)
20 Sailor in comics to look after dad (6)
23 Dug up jeans from below (5)

SUDOKU

2		1	3		8			
	3			2	6			
6					1			8
4		3					8	
	5						9	
	9					6		4
3			9					5
			5	1			6	
			6		2	9		7

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

	B	I	N	G	E	D	R	I	N	K	I	N	G	
		O		R		E		N		I		I		
S	E	N	S	E		M	A	S	O	C	H	I	S	M
T		I		E		I		I		K		G		A
R	I	S	I	N	G	T	I	D	E		D	A	I	S
A		E		L				I		S		T		T
N	E	R	V	I	E	R		O	U	T	F	A	C	E
G				G		E		U		R				R
E	A	R	T	H	E	D		S	P	I	C	E	U	P
N		U		T		E				P		L		I
E	T	N	A		A	V	I	C	U	L	T	U	R	E
S		G		S		E		O		I		S		C
S	M	A	R	T	A	L	E	C		G	L	I	D	E
		T		I		O		C		H		O		
	H	A	I	R	S	P	L	I	T	T	I	N	G	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	2	5	1	3	7	8	6	4
7	4	8	9	6	2	5	3	1
6	3	1	8	5	4	9	2	7
1	8	2	7	4	9	3	5	6
3	6	4	2	8	5	1	7	9
5	7	9	3	1	6	4	8	2
8	5	7	6	9	1	2	4	3
2	1	3	4	7	8	6	9	5
4	9	6	5	2	3	7	1	8

FAITH

Focus on 'Brahman'

At times, there may be a discussion about whether people are born as a result of their past deeds or, after being born, they undertake various deeds. It is like "*Bhijankura Nyaya*". *Bhija* refers to seeds and *ankura* means sprouts. It cannot be said whether sprouts came from seeds first or vice-versa.

Valayapettai Sri Ramachariar said in a discourse that a person whose mind is steadfastly set on the realisation of self and undeluded by the body consciousness would neither rejoice the pleasure nor grieve the grief. He whose mind is engaged in the contemplation of "Brahman" will enjoy undecaying bliss.

For those pleasures that are born of contact are wombs of pain. Five blemishes (doshas) may emerge in the process of enjoyment through worldly contacts: Aarjana dosha – people undergo untold suffering to earn money. Rakshana dosha – encounter with various difficulties to protect and save the hard-earned money. Kshaya dosha – the wealth earned is not permanent and is perishable or destructible. People may constantly fear their wealth will go off them. Bhoga dosha, the more we experience material comforts, the more the urge and desire grow in us. Himsa dosha – it refers to causing trouble to others while we try to obtain the means to enjoy our comforts.

INBRIEF

Swiggy secures investors' approval for ₹10,414-crore IPO

Food and grocery delivery major Swiggy has secured shareholders' nod to raise ₹10,414 crore through issue of fresh equity shares and an offer for sale (OFS), according to sources. A special resolution was passed at an extraordinary general meeting of Swiggy on April 23, they said. According to sources, the Bengaluru-based firm plans to raise up to ₹3,750 crore through fresh equity shares, in addition to an OFS component of up to ₹6,664 crore. PTI

Coromandel International names Alagappan Chairman

Coromandel International Ltd. (CIL) has appointed and re-designated Executive Vice Chairman Arun Alagappan as Executive Chairman on the retirement of Chairman and Non-Executive Director A. Vellayan who was named Chairman Emeritus. Meanwhile, CIL's net profit for the quarter ended March 31, slid 20% YoY to ₹209 crore. Total income contracted 27% to ₹4,027 crore. The board recommended a final dividend of ₹6 per equity share for FY24.

IndiGo 'agrees' to buy 30 Airbus widebody aircraft

Paving the way for non-stop, long-haul international flights, budget carrier IndiGo said it had 'agreed' to order 30 Airbus A350-900 widebody aircraft. The planes are expected to be delivered from 2027. In addition, the budget carrier said in a press statement it also had purchase rights for an additional 70 Airbus A350 family aircraft 'for possible future needs under certain conditions.' The airline has almost 359 aircraft in its fleet.

'Global recovery offers growth upside; food prices to cool'

March spike in world oil, food prices warrant attention, but concerns from geopolitical tensions seen easing, ministry says in economic review

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Upbeat assessment

Global economy is on the mend with major economies seeing a growth rebound that augurs well for India's economy: FinMin

- Says above normal monsoon projection for the year bodes well for a good harvest
- Flags increasing occurrence of weather shocks as posing an upside risk to food prices

'Rural demand pickup, robust investment, sustained manufacturing momentum underpinning economic performance'

The global economy is on the mend with major economies seeing a growth rebound and risk perceptions about geopolitical risks receding, offering a potential upside for growth even as India's economic performance stands out and its key indicators for March reflect a buoyant domestic economic landscape, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

Terming the high food inflation challenge in several major economies a 'situation' warranting continued attention, the ministry noted in its economic review for March that India's food inflation eased to 8.5% last month, from February's 8.7%, while retail inflation slowed to a 10-month low of 4.85%.

'Monsoon forecast key'

Core inflation, which excludes food and energy prices, eased to 3.3% in March, and a further cooling of domestic food prices was on the anvil, the ministry said, citing the above-normal monsoon projection for the year that bodes well for a good harvest. It did, however, caution that the recent uptick in inflationary pressures across nations along with persistence in core inflation warranted attention.

"Global commodity prices increased in March 2024, driven by both energy and non-energy commodities. Crude oil prices have firmed up since December 2023, partially driven by increasing tension in West Asia and OPEC+ countries deciding to maintain supply constraints until mid-2024," the ministry noted, adding that food prices had also firmed up in March, following a seven-month-long declining trend, driven primarily by rising prices of vegetable oils.

'Risk of weather shocks'

"While a record rabi crop will help in moderating cereal prices, the increasing occurrence of weather shocks poses an upside risk to food prices. Geopolitical tensions and their effect on oil prices add to this risk," the ministry acknowledged.

While geopolitical tensions remain a concern, risk perceptions have softened, offering a potential upside for growth and India continues to exhibit robust economic performance, the ministry said, citing strong domestic demand, rural demand pickup, robust investment, and sustained manufacturing momentum.

The ministry said that improved consumer and investor confidence underpinned the country's ability to navigate global challenges successfully.

"In March 2024, India's economy was marked by record-breaking stock market performance, remarkable GST collections, and substantial growth in the manufacturing and services sectors, reflecting a buoyant domestic economic landscape.

Kotak plunges on RBI order; CEO reassures

Reuters
MUMBAI

Kotak Mahindra Bank's shares plunged on Thursday, a day after the RBI barred India's fourth-biggest private bank by assets from taking on new clients digitally and issuing credit cards, a blow to a lender that relies heavily on online banking.

The Reserve Bank took action after Kotak's tech system failed to manage a surge in transactions when large numbers of customers signed up through its digital banking platform Kotak811, causing sporadic outages, said two Kotak officials and two others with knowledge of the matter.

Kotak fell 10.9% to ₹1,643 on the BSE after sliding 13% intraday to the lowest since November 2020. Jefferies cut its price target for the stock by 4%.

Kotak CEO Ashok Vaswani sought to allay employee concerns, writing in an email, seen by *Reuters*, "we will emerge stronger" and the issue would be resolved "in short order".

'FPO marks start of Vodafone Idea 2.0'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Vodafone Idea Ltd.'s successful fundraising of ₹18,000 crore through its Follow-on Public Offer (FPO) would enable the company to stage a turnaround, Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said on Thursday.

"On the back of this fund raise and continued support from banks, Vodafone Idea will stage a smart turnaround. This moment... marks the beginning of Vodafone Idea 2.0. I believe that a revitalised Vodafone Idea is important for India," Mr. Birla said at VIL's FPO listing event at the NSE.

Mr. Birla assserted that the successful conclusion of 'India's largest FPO' had been shaped 'significantly' by the government's reform package.

"The policy environment today encourages investment, innovation, and competition. India's digital economy is booming, and robust telecom networks are crucial to support this growth. A nation of 1.4 billion people deserves three private telecom players," he said.

The Union government owns 33% in VIL, which is part of Aditya Birla Group.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,339	0.66
US Dollar	83.28	0.06
Gold	72,500	-0.15
Brent oil	87.79	0.67

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3115.25	71.70
Adani Ports	1330.55	10.05
Apollo Hosp	6384.10	100.75
Asian Paints	2861.45	-6.30
Axis Bank	1127.00	63.75
Bajaj Auto	8734.90	37.80
Bajaj Finserv	1655.55	25.20
Bajaj Finance	7294.90	-34.25
Bharti Airtel	1338.70	2.30
BPCL	603.40	10.05
Britannia Ind	4844.15	15.20
Cipla	1406.20	8.00
Coal India	452.45	8.60
Divis Lab	3843.80	30.00
Dr Reddys Lab	6218.75	267.95
Eicher Motors	4615.20	84.50
Grasim Ind	2367.45	29.70
HCL Tech	1504.15	24.90
HDFC Bank	1510.75	-0.95
HDFC Life	594.70	0.50
Hero MotoCorp	4498.30	104.95
Hindalco	646.80	10.70
Hind Unilever	2230.85	-29.40
ICICI Bank	1113.75	17.00
IndusInd Bank	1496.10	21.45
Infosys	1438.45	7.70
ITC	437.55	8.65
JSW Steel	905.80	23.10
Kotak Bank	1642.45	-200.35
L&T	3652.30	17.45
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4634.70	-92.10
M&M	2096.85	38.40
Maruti Suzuki	12922.50	-21.55
NestleIndia	2562.65	62.50
NTPC	359.20	7.55
ONGC	281.95	2.60
PowerGrid Corp	293.30	2.90
Reliance Ind	2919.95	19.60
SBI Life	1444.45	-15.60
State Bank	812.70	39.60
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2491.85	30.80
Sun Pharma	1520.15	34.40
TataConsumerProduct	1106.25	-3.90
Tata Motors	1001.25	9.60
Tata Steel	167.70	2.15
TCS	3852.20	21.15
Tech Mahindra	1190.30	4.60
Titan	3571.10	-38.65
UltraTech Cement	9683.75	24.90
Wipro	461.00	1.10

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 25

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.12	83.44
Euro	89.14	89.48
British Pound	103.99	104.40
Japanese Yen (100)	53.42	53.63
Chinese Yuan	11.47	11.51
Swiss Franc	91.03	91.38
Singapore Dollar	61.13	61.37
Canadian Dollar	60.75	60.99
Malaysian Ringitt	17.40	17.48
Australian Dollar	54.24	54.45

Source:Indian Bank

Happiest Minds to buy PureSoftware for ₹779 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Tech veteran Ashok Soota-promoted Happiest Minds Technologies on Thursday said it signed definitive agreements to acquire 100% of the equity share capital of Noida-based PureSoftware Technologies Private Ltd. for a total purchase consideration of $94.5 million (₹779 crore)

This would include upfront payout of ₹635 crore on deal closure and a deferred payment of ₹144 crore payable at the end of FY25 on achievement of set performance targets, the firm said in a filing. PureSoftware logged $43 million in FY24 revenue.

Hyundai, Kia aim at 1.5-mn cars in output

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Hyundai Motor Group (HMG) announced its mid- to long-term strategies to respond to the Indian automotive market and to solidify its position as a leading mobility company.

Addressing the first overseas town hall meeting, HMG Executive Chair Euisun Chung shared the group's vision for the Indian market with HMIL employees in New Delhi on April 23.

As per plans, HMIL and Kia India are planning to produce 1.5 million vehicles annually in India. Besides, it is also planning to strengthen its electric vehicle leadership through its electrification strategy.

HMIL will start operating the recently acquired GM plant in Pune in the second half of next year. The Pune plant is currently being upgraded to create a production hub capable of building more than 2,00,000 units annually, using smart manufacturing technology and systems, the Korean car maker said in a statement.

HC orders review of Tata Motor's ALL patent challenge

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has ordered reconstitution of the Opposition Board in a challenge by Tata Motors Ltd. (TML) to a patent held by Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) for a product titled 'Multi-Axle Vehicle Configuration having Heavy Duty Lift Axle' since 2016.

A Division Bench of Justices M. Sundar and K. Govindarajan Thilakavadi set aside a single judge's order dismissing ALL's writ petition (WP) and directed the Controller of Patents and Designs in Chennai to reconstitute the Opposition Board in a fortnight.

Disposing of the WP filed by ALL, the Bench ordered that the Opposition Board conduct a fresh appreciation of the documents and evidences from both sides before submitting its recommendation to the Controller by May 22.

ALL's counsel told the Court that TML opposed his client's patent under Section 25(2) of the Patents Act, 1970. The opposition was raised on multiple grounds like lack of novelty, product not falling under the definition of invention and so on.

TML relied on two expert's evidence to support its ALL patent opposition.

CPCL Q4 net dips on low price, forex loss

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (CPCL) reported standalone net profit for the quarter ended March 31 fell 39% year-on-year to ₹612 crore due to lower prices and foreign exchange loss.

Revenue from operations slid to ₹20,823 crore, from ₹21,350 crore, on account of lower refinery transfer price realisation, the oil refiner said in a statement.

'Low product cracks'

Its gross refining margin (GRM) was $7.71/bbl against $12.48/bbl in the year-earlier period. The decline was mainly due to lower product cracks in the international markets, CPCL said. Industry benchmark Singapore GRM stood at $6.60/bbl.

'Emphasise domestic patents, subsidy for semiconductors'

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Semiconductor design initiatives must be encouraged with improved local fundraising opportunities and incentives for using domestically registered intellectual property (IP), the India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA) said in a report Thursday.

As China's semiconductor industry faces hesitant investors due to geopolitical tensions, India must seize the opportunities this presents the ICEA said.

Referring to arguments by economists like Raghuram Rajan that the semiconductor push may not present optimal economic or employment opportunities, Pankaj Mohindroo, chairman, ICEA, pushed back strongly, calling such arguments "self-destructive for India". "Capacity building for high tech and semiconductors is important," Mr. Mohindroo said.

"Though we have 20% of the world's semicon engineers, none of the IPs are with India," A.M. Devendranath, CEO of research firm Feedback Advisory pointed out. Engineers instead work for global firms from India, which register the IP in the U.S. or elsewhere. Mr. Mohindroo suggested incentivising domestic registration of IPs in key sectors, like in expanding telecom networks.

'China over invested'

ICEA highlighted the strengths of other countries who have succeeded in the semiconductor supply chain: China has "over-invested" in low-tech chips, crashing global prices and investment appetite for researching them, while opening up initiatives that make access to funding easy with early exits for investors.

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise and group company of IndianOil)
Regd. Office: 536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai - 600 018
Website: www.cpcl.co.in ; Email id: investors@cpcl.co.in, shankarp@cpcl.co.in
Tel: 044-24349833 / 24346807
CIN - L40101TN1965GOI005389

EXTRACT OF THE STATEMENT OF AUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE					CONSOLIDATED				
		Three Months Ended			Year Ended		Three Months Ended			Year Ended	
		31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2023
		Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited	Audited
1.	Total income from operations	20826.44	20456.41	21351.98	79285.50	90923.39	20826.44	20456.42	21351.83	79283.01	90915.49
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	843.52	481.05	1387.64	3659.87	4808.70	859.03	486.34	1396.26	3693.69	4806.42
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	843.52	481.05	1387.64	3659.87	4808.70	859.03	486.34	1396.26	3693.69	4806.42
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	612.38	359.99	1004.19	2711.25	3533.81	627.89	365.28	1012.81	2745.07	3531.53
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	615.19	359.99	990.89	2714.06	3520.51	630.72	365.28	999.41	2747.90	3518.13
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face Value - ₹ 10 each)	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91	148.91
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)				8194.01	5882.01				8421.97	6076.13
8.	Securities Premium Account				250.04	250.04				250.04	250.04
9.	Networth				8592.96	6280.96				8820.92	6475.08
10.	Paid up Debt Captial / Outstanding Debt (Bonds / Debentures) excluding Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares				1585.00	1585.00				1585.00	1585.00
11.	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares (50,00,00,000 {2023:50,00,00,000} Non-Convertible Cumulative Redeemable Preference Shares of ₹ 10 each) (Not listed)				500.00	500.00				500.00	500.00
12.	Debt Equity Ratio				0.32	0.67				0.31	0.65
13.	Earnings Per Share (of ₹. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)										
	(i) Basic (₹ / share)	41.12	24.17	67.44	182.07	237.31	42.17	24.53	68.01	184.34	237.16
	(ii) Diluted (₹ / share)	41.12	24.17	67.44	182.07	237.31	42.17	24.53	68.01	184.34	237.16
14.	Capital Redemption Reserve				1000.00	1000.00				1000.00	1000.00
15.	Debenture Redemption Reserve					-					-
16.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio				10.79	2.39				10.89	2.39
17.	Interest Service Coverage Ratio				20.10	17.30				20.26	17.29

Note:

1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites: www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com. The same is also available on the company's website www.cpcl.co.in

2 For the other line items referred in regulation 52(4) of the Listing Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to Stock Exchanges (BSE and NSE) and can be acessed on www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com

Place : Chennai
Date : April 24, 2024

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Rohit Kumar Agrawala
Director (Finance)
DIN: 10048961

BEIRUT

Hezbollah denies Israel claim it killed half of commanders in south

AFP

Hezbollah denied on Thursday an Israeli claim that it had killed half of the Iran-backed Lebanese group's commanders in the south of the country, saying only a handful were slain. A Hezbollah source who spoke on condition of anonymity rejected the claim of Israel Defence Minister Yoav Gallant who had made the remarks. AFP

KUALA LUMPUR

Former Malaysia PM Mahathir Mohamad faces anti-graft probe

AFP

Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is being probed in a graft investigation involving his two sons, the country's anti-corruption body said on Thursday. Mahathir, 98, is a political rival and fierce critic of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who came to power in 2022 vowing to stamp out high-level corruption. AFP

NEW YORK

New York court overturns Harvey Weinstein's sex crime conviction

AP

New York's highest court overturned Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's 2020 conviction on sex crime charges, a shock reversal in one of the defining cases of the #MeToo movement. The court cited errors in the way the trial was conducted, including admitting the testimony of women who were not part of the charges. AFP

YEREVAN

Protests erupt across Armenia against land transfer to Azerbaijan

AFP

Dozens of Armenian protested on Thursday, including in the capital Yerevan, angry at what they see as territorial concessions to Azerbaijan. The latest flare-up comes after the two countries began physical demarcation of a contested border section in a bid to move closer to an elusive peace deal after three decades of conflict. AFP

French police break up pro-Palestine varsity protest

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The French police broke up a pro-Palestinian protest by dozens of university students in Paris, officials said on Thursday, as Israel's bombardment of Gaza sparks a wave of anger across college campuses in the United States.

The police intervened as dozens of students gathered on a central Paris campus of the prestigious Sciences Po university on Wednesday evening.

"After discussions with management, most of them agreed to leave the premises," university officials said in a statement, saying the protest was adding to "tensions" at the university.

But "a small group of students" refused to leave and "it was decided that the police would evacuate the site," the statement added.

100 arrested in pro-Palestine protests at U.S. universities

93 persons held at the University of Southern California, while 34 at the University of Texas; demonstrations are only the latest in a string of protests which began at the Columbia University

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

More than 100 people were arrested on Wednesday at two universities in California and Texas, officials said, after pro-Palestinian protests erupted across U.S. campuses this week.

Demonstrations flared at the University of Southern California's (USC) Los Angeles campus, where 93 people were arrested for trespassing, and at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin, where 34 were arrested, according to authorities.

The tense stand-offs were among the latest on-campus confrontations between law enforcement, including the police in riot gear, and banner-wielding students outraged at the mounting death toll in Israel's war against Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Noble cause: A demonstrator holds a sign after at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles on Wednesday. REUTERS

USC said on social media site X at around midnight that the protest had ended and the campus would remain "closed until further notice."

The LAPD said there were no reports of injuries and patrols would remain in the area on Thursday.

Free speech

The spreading pro-Palestinian protests began at Columbia University in New York, where dozens of arrests were made last week after university authorities called in police to quell a protest encampment that some Jewish students said was threatening and anti-Semitic.

Demonstrators, including a number of Jewish students, have disavowed instances of anti-Semitism and criticised officials equating it with opposition to Israel.

As students and other demonstrators have camped out on school quads, occupied university buildings and disrupted campus activities, universities this week have affirmed their rights to free speech and peaceful protest.

But pro-Israel supporters and others worried about campus safety have also pointed to anti-Semitic incidents and allege that campuses are encouraging intimidation and hate speech.

'Hamas will lay down arms if Palestine state is established'

Associated Press
ISTANBUL

A top Hamas political official told The Associated Press the Islamic militant group is willing to agree to a truce of five years or more with Israel and that it would lay down its weapons and convert into a political party if an independent Palestinian state is established along pre-1967 borders.

The comments by Khalil al-Hayya in an interview on Wednesday came amid a stalemate in months of talks for a ceasefire in Gaza. The suggestion that Hamas would disarm appeared to be a significant concession by the militant group officially committed to Israel's destruction.

But it's unlikely Israel would consider such a scenario. It has vowed to crush Hamas following the deadly October 7 attacks that triggered the war, and its current leadership is adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state on lands Israel captured in the 1967 West Asian war.

Khalil al-Hayya

Al-Hayya, a high-ranking Hamas official who has represented the Palestinian militants in negotiations for a cease-fire and hostage exchange, struck a sometimes defiant and other times conciliatory tone.

Joining PLO

Speaking to the AP in Istanbul, Al-Hayya said Hamas wants to join the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by the rival Fatah faction, to form a unified government for Gaza and the West Bank. He said Hamas would accept "a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the international resolutions," along Israel's pre-1967 borders.

If that happens, he said, the group's military wing would dissolve.

"All the experiences of people who fought against occupiers, when they became independent and obtained their rights and their state, what have these forces done? They have turned into political parties and their defending fighting forces have turned into the national army," he said.

Al-Hayya did not say whether his apparent embrace of a two-state solution would amount to an end to the Palestinian conflict with Israel or an interim step toward the group's stated goal of destroying Israel.

Bangladesh repatriates Myanmar troops who fled border clashes

Agence France-Presse
COX'S BAZAR

Bangladesh sent home nearly 300 Myanmar troops and civil servants on Thursday who fled across the border to escape attacks on their outposts near the frontier between the two countries. Myanmar has been roiled in conflict since the military seized power from a democratically elected government in a 2021 coup.

A Myanmar-flagged ship carrying them departed from the Naniarchar river port, officials said

Violent clashes between soldiers of the Arakan Army, an armed group belonging to an ethnic minority, and junta forces since late last year saw hundreds of fleeing troops cross into Bangladesh.

Government officials said that a Myanmar-flagged ship carrying soldiers, police and civil servants departed from the river port of Naniarchar on Thursday.

288 troops

"All 288 troops, which mostly include Myanmar's Border Guard Police and some Army soldiers and immigration officials, left Naniarchar at around 6 a.m.," a senior government official said.

Bangladesh has stepped up security along its border with Myanmar, fearing that the conflict there could trigger another major influx of Rohingya Muslim refugees caught in the fighting.

India deported last month dozens of Myanmar nationals who fled a recent surge of fighting between the junta and fighters from an alliance of ethnic minority groups near its shared border.

In Beijing, Blinken says U.S. and China should manage differences responsibly

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Thursday on the United States and China to manage their differences "responsibly" as he landed in Beijing for tough talks with the rival power's leaders.

Mr. Blinken is expected to address a range of thorny issues including Chinese support for Russia and its treatment of Taiwan, with China likely to raise trade concerns such as new U.S. action against popular social media app TikTok.

Mr. Blinken headed straight to a closed-door gathering with leading Chinese scholars on Thursday.

On Friday, a full day of talks with China's political leadership is planned, including a possible meeting with President Xi Jinping.

Mr. Blinken arrived from Shanghai, where the top U.S. diplomat attempted a charm offensive that saw him sample local food, watch a basketball game and stroll along the city's famous Bund promenade.

Visiting the local Communist Party leader in a room with sweeping views of the Shanghai skyline, Mr. Blinken said U.S. President Joe Biden was committed to "direct and sustained" dialogue between the world's two largest economies after years of mounting tension.

"I think it's important to underscore the value – in fact, the necessity – of direct engagement, of speaking to each other, laying out our differences, which are real, seeking to work through them," Mr. Blinken said.

"We have an obligation for our people – indeed an obligation to the world – to manage the relationship between our two countries responsibly."

Sport

Memorable day for Babli and Madhuri

FED CUP WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi
VARANASI

Babli made a remarkable comeback to beat Manshi Yadav in the women's 55kg final and secure her maiden gold medal at the elite level in the Federation Cup wrestling tournament at the Maharaja Vibhuti Narain Indoor Stadium here on Thursday.

Hailing from Yamunanagar district in Haryana, the 23-year-old Babli, who took to wrestling about four-and-a-half years ago, recorded a 15-8 win in the title clash to bag her first significant medal.

Trailing 6-2, Babli cashed in on an opportunity to apply a leg lace and level the scores at the break. Backed by her coach Amit Kumar, a fitter Babli grabbed another four points to extend her lead.

In control: Babli has Manshi at her mercy in the 55kg final. SANDEEP SAXENA

Against her opponent's weak attacks, Babli employed quick counters to gather more points and emerge as the winner.

Nineteen-year-old Madhuri Patel from Khandwa erased a five point deficit in the second period to beat Gunjan Sharma 8-7 in the women's 50kg final and win her maiden gold.

The medallists (women): **50kg:** 1. Madhuri Patel (MP), 2. Gunjan Sharma (Chd), 3. Chanchal Sirohi (UP), Rimpa Kumari (Jha); **53kg:** 1. Shivani Sharma (MP), 2. Kirti (Har), 3. Sheetal (Del), Juli (UP); **55kg:** 1. Babli (Har), 2. Manshi Yadav (UP), 3. Aishwarya Karigar (Kar), Deeksha (Raj); **57kg:** 1. Neha (Del), 2. Sandhya Pal (UP), 3. Nisha Saini (Raj), Shilpa (Har). **59kg:** 1. Nitika (Har), 2. Pooja Yadav (UP), 3. Akansha (Mah), Unnati Rathore (Del); **62kg:** 1. Renchi (Har), 2. Pooja Tomar (UP), 3. Payal Patel (MP), Shrushti (Mah); **65kg:** 1. Freedom Yadav (UP), 2. Manju (Del), 3. Sujatha Patil (Kar), Juhi Kumari (Bih); **68kg:** 1. Sarika (Har), 2. Sumitra (Del), 3. Deepika Nain (Chd), Maya Mali (Raj); **72kg:** 1. Srishti (Del), 2. Reshma (Mah), 3. Pathan Sandfar (Guj), Tanu (Raj); **76kg:** 1. Bipasha (Del), 2. Ankit Shekhawat (Raj), 3. Jaspreet Kaur (Pun), Pranjal Sonkar (MP).

Ranvir, Ekta, Anurag, and Pavana strike it rich

ASIAN U-20 ATHLETICS

Sports Bureau

Ranvir Kumar Singh and junior National record-holder Ekta Pradeep Dey won the men's and women's 3000m steeplechase gold at the Asian under-20 athletics championships in Dubai on Thursday. Ranvir clocked 9:22.67s for the men's title while Ekta won in 10:31.95s.

Pavana Nagaraj produced a personal best 6.32m to take the women's long jump gold and UP's Anurag Singh Kaler claimed the men's shot put title (19.23m) with defending champion Siddarth Choudhary (19.02) taking the bronze.

Meanwhile, Vinod Singh (men's 5000m, 14:09.44s) and Amanat Kamboj (women's discus, 50.45m) won silver medals.

Nikita Kumari, the junior Federation Cup women's discus throw champion with 50.17m in Lucknow, was fourth with 46.84m.

There were bronze medals from Aman Chaudhary in the men's 400m (47.53s) and from junior National record holder Aarti in the women's 10,000m race walk.

Aarti achieved the qualification standard for the under-20 Worlds with her time of 47:45.33s.

There was some disappointment in the women's 400m, with Anushka Kumbhar (56.52s) and junior Federation Cup champion Sai Sangeetha Dodla (57.26s) finishing fifth and seventh respectively.

Ranvir (3000m steeplechase).

Ekta (3000m steeplechase).

Anurag (shot put).

Pavana (long jump)

SAFE HANDS

Pant joins list of wicketkeepers with most dismissals

SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Rishabh Pant is now fourth in the list of wicketkeepers with most dismissals (92) in the IPL. The DC captain stands in fourth place on the list. M.S. Dhoni holds the top place on the list with 185 dismissals. Dinesh Karthik and Wriddhiman Saha stand in second and third place with 170 and 112.

NOT RIGHT

Capitals' Rasikh reprimanded for 'overboard' celebration

AFP

Delhi Capitals pacer Rasikh Salam Dar has been reprimanded for going overboard with his celebration after taking a wicket during the IPL match against Gujarat Titans here. Salam committed a Level 1 offence — "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from another player".

FRESH OUTLOOK

Ramandeep credits Gambhir's influence for KKR's turnaround

K.R. DEEPAK

KKR has transformed into a winning outfit due to the influence of mentor and former captain Gautam Gambhir, said Ramandeep Singh ahead of the game against PBKS. "There is a lot of clarity about the roles in the team. It is only because of him that the team is performing well. He is backing everyone," said Ramandeep.

REPLACEMENT

Naib included in Delhi Capitals squad in place of injured Marsh

R.V. MOORTHY

Delhi Capitals on Thursday drafted in Afghanistan all-rounder Gulbadin Naib as a replacement for Mitchell Marsh for the remainder of IPL 2024. Naib joins Capitals for his base price of ₹50 lakh. Marsh was ruled out with a hamstring injury and the Australian all-rounder had flown back to Perth on April 12.

All-round Royal Challengers have the measure of Sunrisers

Visitors' attack strikes regularly to scuttle the hosts' chase after Patidar, Kohli hit contrasting half-centuries for Bengaluru

IPL-17

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

Royal Challengers Bengaluru delivered a stunning all-round performance to upset crowd-favourite Sunrisers Hyderabad, registering a 35-run victory in their IPL league match, at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium on Thursday.

The visitors' performance also served a reminder that the SRH batting line-up can be brittle in the face of accurate, if not unplayable, bowling and also raised hopes for other teams as the championship heads for the business-end.

Chasing 207 for victory, the home team was straightaway under pressure with Will Jacks inducing a poor stroke from the dangerous Impact Player Travis Head off the sixth ball of the innings.

Soon, fellow-opener Abhishek Sharma's cameo ended, mistiming a pull off Yash Dayal only to be caught behind, before SRH's Impact Player, the left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh, trapped Aiden Markram leg-before with a low full-toss.

RCB was back on top again when Heinrich Klaasen, who had hit the previous ball from Swapnil for a six over long-on, perished trying to repeat the stroke off the next.

Later, leg-spinner Karn Sharma had Nitish Kumar Reddy bowled, missing a reverse sweep, and then took a smart return catch to send back the dangerous Abdul Samad to reduce SRH to 85 for six in 9.1 overs. The rest of the innings was a formality as RCB notched up a much-needed victory.

Smash hit: Patidar provided impetus to the Royal Challengers innings with a stroke-filled knock. R. RAGU

Coming good

Earlier, Rajat Patidar's brilliance at the top of the order, an unusually slow half-century by Virat Kohli, and a cameo in the final overs by Cameron Green helped Royal Challengers score a challenging 206 for seven.

Though Kohli struggled to get going after all his boundaries came within the first six overs, Patidar compensated by scoring a 20-ball half-century that included four sixes off leg-spinner Mayank Markande in the 11th over of the innings.

Jaydev Unadkat was the pick of the SRH bowlers with a three-wicket haul, including the prize scalps of Patidar and Kohli. RCB scored 64 runs from the last five overs, mainly due to some lusty blows from Green.

Next assignment

RCB: April 28 vs **GT**
Ahmedabad, 3.30 p.m.

SRH: April 28 vs **CSK**
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Virat Kohli c Samad b Unadkat 51 *(43b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Faf du Plessis c Markram b Natarajan 25 *(12b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Will Jacks b Markande 6 *(9b)*, Rajat Patidar c Samad b Unadkat 50 *(20b, 2x4, 5x6)*, Cameron Green (not out) 37 *(20b, 5x4)*, Mahipal Lomror c Cummins b Unadkat 7 *(4b, 1x4)*, Dinesh Karthik c Samad b Cummins 11 *(6b, 2x4)*, Swapnil Singh **(Impact Player in place of Patidar)** c Abhishek b Natarajan 12 (6b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-2, w-5): 7; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 206.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-48 (du Plessis, 3.5 overs), 2-65 (Jacks, 6.6), 3-130 (Patidar, 12.4), 4-140 (Kohli, 14.5), 5-161 (Lomror, 16.3), 6-193 (Karthik, 18.5), 7-206 (Swapnil, 19.6).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Abhishek 1-0-10-0, Bhuvneshwar 1-0-14-0, Cummins 4-0-55-1, Natarajan 4-0-39-2, Shahbaz 3-0-14-0, Markande 3-0-42-1, Unadkat 4-0-30-3.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Abhishek Sharma c Karthik b Yash Dayal 31 *(13b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Travis Head **(Impact player in place of Natarajan)** c Karn b Jacks 1 *(3b)*, Aiden Markram lbw b Swapnil 7 *(8b, 1x4)*, Nitish Reddy b Karn 13 *(13b, 1x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen c Green b Swapnil 7 *(3b, 1x6)*, Shahbaz Ahmed (not out) 40 *(37b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Abdul Samad c & b Karn 10 *(6b, 1x6)*, Pat Cummins c Siraj b Green 31 *(15b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Bhuvneshwar Kumar c Siraj b Green 13 *(13b, 3x4)*, Jaydev Unadkat (not out) 8 *(10b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-8): 10; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 171.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-3 (Head, 0.6), 2-37 (Abhishek, 3.4), 3-41 (Markram, 4.2), 4-56 (Klaasen, 4.6), 5-69 (Nitish, 7.2), 6-85 (Samad, 9.1), 7-124 (Cummins, 13.1), 8-141 (Bhuvneshwar, 15.5).

RCB BOWLING

Jacks 2-0-23-1, Siraj 4-0-20-0, Yash Dayal 3-0-18-1, Swapnil 3-0-40-2, Karn 4-0-29-2, Ferguson 2-0-28-0, Green 2-0-12-2.

Toss: RCB; **PoM:** Patidar.
Royal Challengers won by 35 runs.

Knight Riders face the Kings, hope to continue fine run

Spicing it up: Salt has been in blazing form this season. K.R. DEEPAK

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders will hope for another positive result at home to strengthen its position in the league table when it meets Punjab Kings at the Eden Gardens here on Friday.

Currently second with 10 points, KKR has a fairly good success rate, having won five of its seven matches. This is largely because of the efficiency of its batting, which has been amassing scores of above 200 regularly.

KKR will be playing its fourth consecutive game at home, where it has won two and lost one in the three previous appearances.

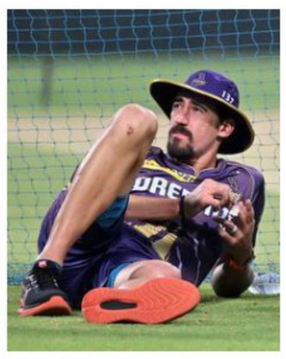
The last match saw 443 runs being scored as the host edged out Royal Challengers Bengaluru by the narrowest of margins – one run.

The KKR top-order has been in good form with the likes of Sunil Narine (286), Phil Salt (249), skipper Shreyas Iyer (190) and Andre Russell (155) contributing. Despite a huge investment, the bowlers have not been able to reach the level expected of them even with the presence of Mitchell Starc, who was bought for a record amount of ₹24.75 crore.

For the ninth-placed Kings, the journey so far has been far from satisfactory. The team lost its last four matches in a total of six defeats in eight games. It will hope to turn things around by outshining the home side.

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	8	7	1	14	0.698
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	5	2	10	1.206
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	5	3	10	0.577
Lucknow Super Giants	8	5	3	10	0.148
Chennai Super Kings	8	4	4	8	0.415
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	8	-0.386
Gujarat Titans	9	4	5	8	-0.974
Mumbai Indians	8	3	5	6	-0.227
Punjab Kings	8	2	6	4	-0.292
Royal Challengers	9	2	7	4	-0.721



Starc. K.R. DEEPAK

Starc available for selection: Ramandeep

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

KKR all-rounder Ramandeep Singh dismissed injury concerns surrounding Mitchell Starc, saying the Australian left-arm pacer was available for selection. "He is available. It has got to do with his workload management. He is a legend. We can't judge him from a few matches," said Ramandeep.

Dhawan to miss match

Meanwhile, Punjab Kings will have to continue without captain Shikhar Dhawan, who is yet to recover fully from a shoulder injury.

"He is on the road to recovery. Hopefully, he should be fit and available for the next match (against CSK)," said PBKS bowling coach Sunil Joshi.

Sam Curran will be the stand-in skipper till that time, informed Joshi.

Today's match

Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 32
KKR 21 | PBKS 11

PREVIOUS MEETING
KKR won by five wickets, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Mukesh — from fringe player to death overs specialist

Amol Karhadkar
NEW DELHI

Ever since the IPL's 2023 edition, Mukesh Kumar has evolved from being a fringe player to having earned the rare distinction of making his international debut across all three formats in the same series. Besides, the pacer has been unveiled in a new avatar – that of a death overs specialist – by Delhi Capitals.

The manner in which Mukesh – who relies on seam as his key arsenal, at least in the red-ball format – is being used in a new role may have surprised quite a few people, but the pacer himself was ready for the challenge.

Mukesh... a new role.
SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"I was told last season to be prepared for bowling at the death, so I was doing accordingly," said Mukesh.

In an endeavour to enhance his skills, he turned towards Ishant Sharma – his sounding board at DC – whose rich experience helped him develop the "slower ball, knuckle ball and wide yorkers".

It reflected in the manner in which he stuck to his plan of bowling slower balls or low full-tosses to defend 18 runs in the last over and help Capitals edge out Gujarat Titans on Wednesday.

Jasprit Bumrah helped Mukesh understand the effective use of the yorker.

"I was focusing on yorkers last season but Jassi *bhai* made me realise that a yorker's effectiveness depends on the conditions and the pace of the pitch."

From a sceptical signing to an indispensable part of the Super Kings squad: the Dube story

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

When Chennai Super Kings got Shivam Dube in 2022, there was scepticism about the call to go with the all-rounder who had flattered to deceive in the IPL in the three seasons before that.

But since donning the yellow jersey, Dube has turned a corner and become an indispensable part of the squad. Much of that is down to role clarity that the team has given him. After being given the licence to take on the spinners during the middle-overs, Dube has excelled, using his long reach and power to devastating effect.

Unstoppable: Much of Dube's success in the yellow jersey is down to the clarity of role CSK has given him. M. VEDHAN

But even as his game against spin kept improving, teams quickly assessed his shortcomings against the quicks and preferred to tie him down with pacers serving him chin music. However, after the first eight games, Dube has shown that he is ready for the task, with 311 runs under his belt, including three half-centuries (SR: 169), this year.

In the matches against Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants, where he scored 66, all his boundaries came off the medium-pacers even as teams stopped bowling spinners to him.

When tested with the short-pitched stuff, Dube has shown the confidence to roll his wrists over while also muscling some mighty ones down the ground if the bowlers erred in length. "Got to give a lot of credit to Dube for working tirelessly against the short ball, an area he needed to improve. As the teams bowled short balls at him a few years ago, he would only duck and defend. Now, not only can he play the short ones, but he can also find boundaries," said CSK batting coach Micheal Hussey recently.

"So, that's a testament to the work he has put in, and he has given it back to the bowlers, forcing them to try something new," added Hussey.

If his heroics last year got him back into the India squad after a gap of three years, by addressing his weakness this year, Dube has given himself a good chance of making it to the T20 World Cup squad.

INBRIEF

Liverpool's title bid rocked by Everton, United survives scare

Liverpool's Premier League title bid suffered a devastating blow in a 2-0 defeat at Merseyside rival Everton, while Manchester United spared Erik ten Hag's blushes with a 4-2 victory against lowly Sheffield United on Wednesday.

The results: Crystal Palace 2 (Mateta 55, 88) bt Newcastle 0; Everton 2 (Branthwaite 27, Calvert-Lewin 58) bt Liverpool 0; Manchester United 4 (Maguire 42, Fernandes 61-pen, 81, Hojlund 85) bt Sheffield United 2 (Bogle 35, Brereton Diaz 50); Wolves 0 lost to Bournemouth 1 (Semenyo 37).

Former Pakistan skipper Bismah retires

Bismah Maroof, Pakistan's former captain, on Thursday retired from all international cricket with immediate effect. Bismah, 32, was forced into a long break from cricket, first in 2020 and then after giving birth to a baby girl in 2021.

Xavi to remain as Barcelona coach, says the club

Xavi will remain as coach of Barcelona, the club said on Wednesday, despite having announced in January that he planned to quit at the end of the season. Spanish media reported that Xavi, who had signed a contract extension until 2025 last autumn, decided on his change of mind.

I think I'm ready for the challenge, says Gukesh

"I'm fine with playing Ding anywhere. Obviously, it'll be nice to play at home. Wherever I play, the goal is to be focused and win the match"

CHESS

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

On a high: Gukesh arrived in Chennai in the wee hours of Thursday to a grand welcome. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

The reigning World champion Ding Liren of China has not been in great form, as his recent results suggest. The 31-year-old withdrew from several tournaments since becoming the champion in April 2023. Even this year, Ding hasn't done anything of note: finishing ninth in the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee and emerging fifth in the Grenke Chess Classic in Karlsruhe (Germany). Nevertheless, Liren has vowed to make a comeback.

D. Gukesh, the 17-year-old newly-crowned FIDE Candidates winner, who will take on Ding in World championship match scheduled in November-December this year, said the Chinese is a strong player, but insisted that he was ready for the battle.

Strong player

"We have played a few rapid games and some classical. Obviously, he's a very strong player, quite universal. He's been at the top for a long time. It will surely be exciting to play. But I think I'm ready for the challenge," Gukesh told *The Hindu* soon after his arrival here from Toronto.

He was felicitated by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, his alma mater Velammal, and chess officials.

Gukesh said he has no special preference for the venue of the World championship. "I'm fine with playing anywhere. Obviously, it'll be nice to play at home (Chennai). Wherever I play, the goal is to be focused and win the match."

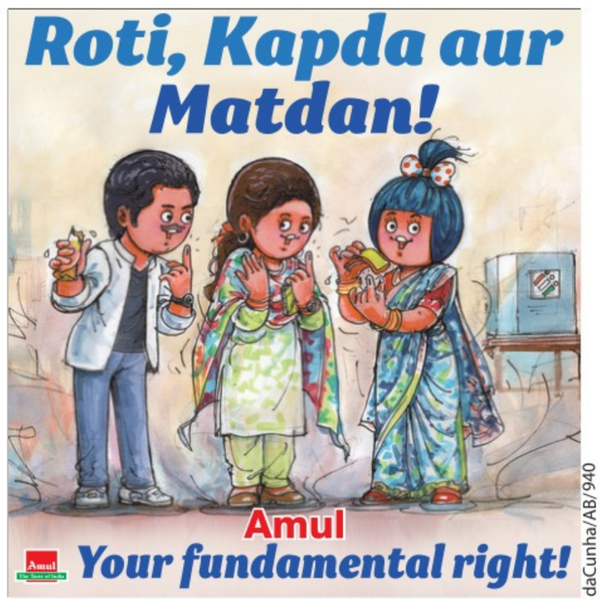
With hardly six months to prepare for the big event, Gukesh knows he has no time to rest on his laurels. The teen prodigy seems to have already planned his next set of moves. "There are already some tournaments I've decided to play. Mainly the Grand Chess Tour, which is a tour of five events. I'll be in Warsaw, Poland in a couple of weeks," he said.

According to the individual gold medal winner of the Chennai Olympiad, a win or a defeat doesn't stay with him for a long time. "Win or defeat stays, they generally say, but it's never been the case for me. I generally managed to recover, whatever the result."

Gukesh singled out his unwavering focus as one of the main reasons for winning the Candidates. "I think the focus that I had and the kind of discipline I went throughout the three weeks. I was very strict and made no compromises. I think that was very important," he said.

Gukesh recalled the immense support of WestBridge Capital, WACA (WestBridge Anand Chess Academy) and his coach Vishnu Prasanna. "I can't really ask for more. Really grateful for their support," he said, while praising five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand for being an inspiration.

"I can't thank Vishy sir enough," he said.



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LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7.30 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12 a.m. (Saturday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

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It was an emotional moment for us, says Gukesh's mother Padma Kumari

Lavanya L
CHENNAI

Hero! Gukesh's return was marked by schoolmates sporting masks bearing his likeness. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

D. Gukesh's Candidates triumph has not only thrust the soft-spoken 17-year-old but also his family into the spotlight. Gukesh returned here to a rousing welcome with the crowd present even preventing his mother, Padma Kumari, from getting through to her son for a while.

"Their flight was early so by the time we came, we were a bit late. I was so happy to see Gukesh. I was searching for him in the crowd. He spotted me and broke through the gathering and came to see us. It was an emotional moment for us," Padma told *The Hindu*.

"Usually, I never follow the games live. I wake up in the morning and see the results. That day, I thought if something good happens, my husband would call and tell me.

"I waited till 5 a.m. I thought since the call hadn't come, maybe Gukesh had drawn and the tournament had progressed to tie-breakers and I went about my work. By 6 a.m., my husband called. I knew something good has happened. We spent a few emotional moments on call."

Padma revealed usually Gukesh calls her twice a day when he's competing once – before the game and once after. Losses would drive Gukesh to ask his mother to spend some more time speaking to him and Padma is armed with inspirational stories of athletes and personalities from across the spectrum to help lift her son's spirits. Usain Bolt is one such source of motivation for her son.

These tales came in handy in two particularly delicate moments over the past few months. Once during the lull before Gukesh qualified for the Candidates, where poor results had dented his confidence, and the other after his loss to Alireza Firouzja in the seventh round in Toronto.

What also helps, she said, is an evolving level of maturity.

Tokyo bronze most special for Valerie

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Sporting legend: Valerie displays her winnings. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Shot putter Valerie Adams has won it all. She stormed to gold medals in two Olympic Games, four World Championships, four World Indoor Championships and three Commonwealth Games. But it is the bronze medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics that is most special to her.

Just to make it to Tokyo was an achievement in itself.

Between the two Olympics, Valerie had two children, and suffered a major medical scare with her second pregnancy.

"Having a child is tough on a woman's body. Having two children is even tougher. I was in a situation where I was nearly lost my life whilst I was pregnant.. To still have the drive to train for the Olympics was pretty crazy," Valerie, the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2024 event ambassador, said in a media interaction here on Thursday.

"To qualify for the Olympics was insane in itself; nobody thought I could do it. When on my hospital bed one day after my surgery, I asked my surgeon when I could go back to training. The surgeon looked at me like I was crazy," Valerie added.

Only 10 months after having major surgery, the New Zealand athlete qualified for Tokyo. The COVID pandemic then forced the Games to be postponed, which again disrupted Valerie's plans.

"When COVID hit, it threw another spanner in the works. I was 36, getting older, and my body was more sore.

"The COVID Games at Tokyo was so different. All of a sudden, I was separated from my family for four and a half months for training. "I was by my own in Tokyo for six weeks. Being away from my children and family – some people would say it is a sacrifice, I would say it is my choice as a way to fulfil my dreams," Valerie said.

Valerie's dream came true with a 19.62m throw – good for a fourth Olympic medal.

An emotional Valerie, undoubtedly among her nation's most decorated sportspersons, held up a picture of her two children after the event.

"I was so driven. I wanted to finish my career on my own terms.

"I am a fierce competitor; I went to the Olympic Games to win a medal. When I won the bronze medal, it felt like a gold because of my journey and the path I had to take," Valerie said.